

THE
E R R O R S
OF THE
BRITISH MINISTER,
IN THE
NEGOTIATION
WITH THE
COURT OF SPAIN.

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M,DCC.XC.

ADVERTISEMENT.

SINCE these Papers were begun in the Gazetteer, a material change has taken place in the circumstances of the country. Events, however, cannot alter principles. There are other mischiefs besides War, in which an ill-managed Negotiation may terminate. While those who conduct it are busied in getting rid of the difficulty, which seems, for the moment, to threaten most, insensibly there will arise a multitude of others, never dreamt of in their wisdom, that, overleaping the limits of a petty, local interest, extend to the whole system of our complicated Empire. It is then that we must strike the balance between the good they boast of having gained, and the faults committed in the pursuit of it. There

is ever something questionable in the benefits of error, and the success of incapacity. The prospect of war, indeed, is removed for the present, and soon the public curiosity will seek another channel. But we must use it while it lasts, in order that if we find cause for censure any where, we may fix that censure where it deserves to fall.

ERRORS

E R R O R S
OF THE
BRITISH MINISTER, &c.

No. I.

September 9, 1790.

NEVER was the feebleness of human foresight more singularly exemplified than in the present situation of this country! The calamities of Europe, as well as the apparent superiority of her own strength, seemed to secure her in the enjoyment of a permanent and happy peace. A period most propitious to its preservation had succeeded the American war. That proud monarchy, whose dangerous preponderance in Europe had so often compelled us to appear in arms, had been gradually losing her ascendancy, and discovered no anxiety to regain it. She found that her encouragement of American resistance had been pushed a step too far; and that, while she probably meant no

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more than the ruin of a rival, she had introduced the seeds of discontent within her own bosom, and justified the spirit of revolution. A domestic danger, threatening even the stability of the Royal power, suspended the progress of her foreign intrigues. The Austrian alliance, by which she promised herself the supreme sway in continental affairs, had by no means answered such expectations. Each of those mighty empires, jealous even in their union, had continually thwarted the other's operations. Holland and Sweden were dismembered from the Bourbon confederacy; and Russia had waited to be driven into it by the fatal improvidence of British counsels. In a word, the deplorable condition of her finances, the general distress and poverty, her navy neglected, and her army altogether without discipline, rendered the kingdom of France, considering her as disposed to offensive measures, an object of no immediate terror to Great Britain.

Relieved from our usual apprehensions on this side, the tranquillity of our empire was menaced with interruption from no other. The Minister himself was not backward in adding the sanction of his authority to the general opinion:—when suddenly the scene shifts, and within a few months after he had renewed his assurances in
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a manner more than ordinarily solemn, we find that he has incurred an expence of about four millions for hostile preparations, that the greater part of our naval force is in commission, the army augmenting by new levies, and three battalions of Guards in daily expectation of embarking upon foreign service. We enquire the cause, and are told these facts:

That since the Minister's pacific assurances, he has informed the country of an outrageous insult offered to the British flag by Spain.

That Spain had agreed to make atonement for that insult.

That the Minister had accepted it, and declared himself satisfied.

That nevertheless he had redoubled his preparations for war. And

That, in this second stage of the dispute, the rest of the maritime powers had come forward, after having adjusted their differences with each other, and were arming every ship in their respective navies with the greatest expedition.

At this place we are naturally led to enquire what new object of dispute can have arisen between Spain and us which can justify the hazard of a war—what condition we are in to enforce that object—how the maritime powers are disposed in case of a rupture—and whether it is

probable that they could have appeared in such force as to make their active co-operation decisive of its event, if this new difficulty had not arisen?

In the rational answer to these suggestions I can see no cause for exultation to my country. But a few months, and the empire of the seas was our's without dispute! Now, if the Minister is anxious that it should exist even in opinion, I fear he must not risque the experiment. Undoubtedly, in a moment which demands our utmost firmness to meet every melancholy possibility, it were most disheartening to conclude that the superiority of the British power, so exultingly vaunted, and so willingly believed, did in fact depend upon the continuance of peace: but the point of most importance to ascertain, because it's determination must decide upon our hopes for the public safety, is, whether the rashness and misconduct of the British Minister has not raised up and united against his country a formidable league, that dares to prescribe limits to her power, and reduce the glory of her name?

It is not wonderful that all ranks of men should look forward with an anxious impatience to the moment that must resolve this doubt. The meeting of Parliament, therefore, on the
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25th, deserves to be considered as an event of no common interest. We cannot suppose that an Assembly, so recently sprung from the mass of their fellow-citizens, will commence the exercise of their trust by the imposition of new burthens, before they satisfy themselves very minutely with regard to the exigency of the public service, and the general state of our affairs. In my mind there is something very auspicious to the public good in the circumstances which, it is well known, has occasioned their meeting before Christmas. The granting of money to a Minister has become so much a matter of course, that it begins to be considered rather as the discharge of a duty than the exercise of one of the dearest privileges of the Lower House. As long as Parliament is not denied its particular franchises and distinctions; as long as its members are permitted the pleasures of debating, and dividing, and enjoy every flattering solemnity of the legislative character, no further enquiries are made—the ends of the constitution seem to be sufficiently answered. Any occurrence, therefore, which can rouse them to a consciousness of their own importance; which can force upon their understandings a direct and operative proof that Government, after all its procrastination, must
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come at last to Parliament for effectual support, is no longer a matter of indifference to the remaining friends of that ancient institution. Had they, indeed, been called together in the expected season, when the Minister had expended the first million, and found that other millions were necessary, all he asked would probably have been granted him with little hesitation or enquiry. They would have felt nothing in the demand to distinguish them from the best or the worst of their predecessors. But it is the desperate measure of plunging the country into a war, without giving them the remotest information as to it's motives, the daring attempt to hurry the operations of the executive power beyond the reach of their controuling voice, and the partial failure in that attempt, by the want of nerves in his coadjutors, (I mean the Directors of the Bank of England) that constitutes the essential difference, and visibly denotes the novelty of a situation of which we cannot doubt but that they will seriously benefit.

To the wisdom and integrity of our Representatives, therefore, we must trust for relief from the irksome suspense of the present hour. In the mean time, as far as we have lights to guide our researches, we shall not find them unprofitably

profitably thrown away in a retrospective view of the conduct of Ministers on this business; Pursuing it with candour and precision, we shall arrive at the discovery of many latent paradoxes which have baffled for a long time the utmost ingenuity of speculation;—we shall gain some determinate knowledge of the real value of a character, an appeal to which was used to charm the fiercest debate, and suspend the operation of human reason. By investigating the means which have been taken to involve us in this unhappy quarrel, we shall judge of the probability of our escaping from it with success. They who feed the consumption of war with the hard earnings of a patient and deluded industry, must naturally wish to be made acquainted with the pretensions of him that is to conduct it.

Motives of no personal nature will direct our steps: his young companions might exhaust the efforts of an heedless partiality, unmolested, in his service; or he might enjoy—if that could please him—the praise of those experienced panegyrists who seldom find any thing to blame in the conduct of a First Lord of the Treasury: for whether he can support the title of a wise negotiator, a spirited assertor of the rights and dignity of the British empire, is a matter of little moment, otherwise than as it may become a sanction

tion for measures eventually the most calamitous that can be pursued in the present posture of our affairs. To that invidious, untasteful, and detracting system, whose only purpose is the solitary censure of an individual, I am persuaded that no man, however violent his animosities, however decided his preference of particular persons, can, in the present situation of parties, have the remotest temptation. Least of all would it be of service to the Opposition. Their exile from situations to which from talents, from public services, from hardy consistency of principle, they have some pretensions, depends on circumstances which have very little to do with the character of their opponents. Before they can hope for favour, they must either "cease to be," or content themselves to be "on this side nothing." They must renounce the avowal of all fixed principle of public conduct;—they must banish union from their objects, and friendship from their political habits.

For one I can answer, that a better motive has produced the following speculations: and if decision be the purpose of enquiry—if the assertion of what we believe to be just, shall be taken to involve (as I am apt to think it does) much of the active duty of a citizen, as well as his undoubted right—I can deem no apology necessary

sary for expressing with all decent freedom my sentiments on the subject of Mr. Pitt's first negotiation with the Court of Spain: for condemning it, as disgraced by the most clumsy errors, directed by a pitiable want of capacity, and disreputably fluctuating between the extremes of anger and timidity; as totally failing in its promised object, as calculated to provoke an extensive war, new in it's principle, and unknown to the policy of Great Britain; as derogatory to the King's honour, and detrimental to the interests of his people.

No. II.

September 10, 1720.

IN the commencement of this dispute the line of conduct to be adopted by Great Britain was obvious, simple, and indispensable. The subjects of Spain having been guilty of various outrages against those of England in time of profound peace, it was the duty of him to whom the defence of our national rights is entrusted, to obtain from his Catholic Majesty the only suitable reparation for those outrages, namely, a disavowal of the acts in the face of Europe, and indemnification to the individuals injured by them.

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To carry this into effect, which seemed to be the object of his Majesty's message to Parliament on the 5th of May, the resources of this great country were called forth, the absolute and uncontrouled disposal of them put into the Minister's hands, without one invidious comment from any part of the House on the transaction itself, and with the statement of only one circumstance that could be deemed hostile to him, namely, that having been in possession of the principal facts relative to the Spanish claims so early as the 10th of February, by a message from the Spanish Ambassador, he did not act justly towards the country, by holding forth to it the prospect of uninterrupted peace on the 19th of April, the day on which he opened the Budget.

With the immense power that he was enabled to exert, in what method did he proceed?

Instead of insisting upon a disavowal of the acts in plain terms, he began a complicated negotiation, distinguishing between the insult and the right to commit it; and thus precluded himself, in the outset, from obtaining a disavowal, which was an essential part of the only possible atonement the Court of Spain could offer to the insulted dignity of the British flag.

For his Catholic Majesty could not have disavowed the outrages committed by his subjects,
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bearing his commission, without acknowledging that they would have no pretence to commit such acts hereafter. If the display of the British power was necessary to compel him into any apology, I maintain that we should have insisted upon an useful apology; thus, while we had the power in our hands, and were clearly acting on the defensive, to have put a stop to the source of future indignities. Instead of which, we have no longer an equal degree of power in our hands, and the ground of the dispute being changed since Mr. Pitt's acceptance of a supposed apology from the Court of Spain, our hostile preparations are no longer for defensive purposes.

All this proceeds from an attempt to separate two questions which are in themselves inseparable, and to maintain a fanciful, academical distinction between the honour and the rights of a nation. While Mr. Pitt was indulging himself in establishing this point, Spain was claiming the stipulations of the Family Compact, Spain was *seeking other alliances throughout Europe* *, Spain was negotiating a peace between Russia and Sweden.

* Vide the memorial presented to Mons. de Montmorin, at Paris, by the Spanish Ambassador, and afterwards laid before the National Assembly.

No. III.

September 11, 1790.

THE original error of dividing the point of honour from the right, pervades and betrays itself throughout the whole negotiation.

As a necessary consequence of his own principles, the Minister is compelled one day to declare himself satisfied with what he has obtained from the Court of Spain; while the dread of exhibiting himself to the ridicule and contempt of Europe obliges him to prove, the next, that he does not consider it as answering the object of his mighty armaments,

His conduct in this respect is not to be misunderstood. The point of honour adjusted, as he acknowledges it to be, to the complete satisfaction of his Britannic Majesty, what object of *hostile preparation* would remain?

Whatever that object, in fact, may be, whether a further atonement, or a commercial treaty, or the dissolution of the political treaties of Spain with other nations, or (to speak ingenuously) plain, honest plunder, there yet remains, in Mr. Pitt's conception, a sufficient one to demand the utmost resources of his exhausted country, and to justify the risque of provoking one of the most bloody wars, as it will be found should

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it ever break out, that ever desolated the human species.

The Minister's conduct proves further, that, previous to his acceptance of the Spanish Declaration, he never intended to be satisfied with it, but that he was determined to insist on more. With this resolution, how could he let pass the fair and proper moment of demanding a disavowal, which, whether sufficient or not, must be acknowledged a necessary and indispensable part of the satisfaction? If it be said he could not insist on a disavowal without involving in some degree the question of right, which he meant to keep distinct from that of satisfaction, I answer, that he is now *contending* for the question of right, and not *negotiating* it; and that the justice and expediency of contending for it being once admitted, it was very unlike a statesman in him first to create two contests instead of one, and secondly to finish and put wholly out of the question that in which he was most evidently right, on every principle which governs the law of nations, for the sake of clearing his way to the other, which is of a very different complexion indeed, when considered on the principles of immutable justice, or on those of a wise and considerate policy.

But a disavowal must come at some period or
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other, or else the satisfaction is incomplete. If it is to be delayed until the question of right is decided, so far from having succeeded in the favourite object of establishing his distinction, Mr. Pitt has involved the two questions most inextricably, by making the completion of the satisfaction depend upon the event of the present negotiation.

Every step he takes not only evinces his error, but his consciousness of it. He tells the world that he is satisfied, and his armaments continue with increased activity. To be consistent with the principle laid down by himself, he was obliged to acknowledge satisfaction with an atonement which his conduct every hour avows to be incomplete.

No. IV.

September 13, 1790.

IN whatever manner the present difference with Spain may terminate, two things are certain; the first, that nothing further is expected from her on the ground of satisfaction for the insults she has offered to the British flag;—the second (an object of remoter enquiry), that her political union with the new kingdom of France is rivetted and confirmed for ever.

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That no further satisfaction is expected, is evident from the declarations exchanged between the two countries. Mr. Pitt has closed the question. He has suffered the moment to elapse, in which he could have demanded a complete satisfaction with justice, and obtained it with considerably less difficulty than he will meet with at present.

I say, "than he will meet with at present," because, such is the absurd consequence of his distinction between honour and right, that he is now, to all intents and purposes, struggling for the essential parts of the satisfaction, and for a point which, connected with the acknowledgment he has obtained, would have rendered it, as far as it went, complete. Common sense, had he condescended to follow its dictates, would have pointed out to him the necessity of making this point a part of the satisfaction indispensably involved in the question of honour. As it stands at present, the settlement of the question of right, whenever produced, can only extend its operation to the source of future indignities. It can have no retrospective reference; and the stain on the British flag must continue to discolour it for ever.

To have avoided these perplexities, which rise up on every side to thwart his progress, nothing
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more was necessary than to have held a plain and proper language in the outset. To have said to the Court of Spain—"You have made your pretended right a ground for various acts of violence and injustice against Great Britain, contrary to the laws of nations, and the common privileges of man. You compel us, therefore, to bring the right so claimed, and abused by you, if it be your's, into serious investigation; and we will not be satisfied for the outrages you have already committed against us, until we have ascertained of what nature that right can be which is thus alledged in defence of such unprecedented violence." This had been the language of justice; and if the consequence had been immediate hostility, the calamities of war had been on the head of him who provoked it, by obstinately asserting the contrary principles. The war on the part of Spain would have been considered as offensive, not only against Great Britain, but against human nature itself.

No. V.

September 14, 1790.

THE advantage which our Minister's principle of negotiating has given to the Spanish Cabinet, is of a double nature. The first relates
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to the grounds on which the war (if such should be the melancholy event of his misconduct) will be maintained; the second relates to the increased ability of Spain to carry it on, compared to the situation she was in two months earlier.

Having accepted with so much eagerness the sort of apology which Spain thought it expedient to offer, the British Minister unequivocally acknowledges thus much—that whatever cause of difference may continue to subsist between the two countries, Great Britain has no further CAUSE OF COMPLAINT against Spain.

Many wars have happened, in which it has been difficult to state which country was the original aggressor; but if there be one method of clearing up such a difficulty more easy than another, or indeed of obviating the existence of it, Mr. Pitt has taken that method in the present dispute; for the essential point of all, in determining the *aggression*, is unquestionably *the degree of just complaint* which may be found to exist between the two nations. Causes of complaint are various. That stated against Spain was the commission of certain acts of violence against British subjects. Not the *right* she has claimed to the exclusive settlement of Nootka Sound, but the *acts* by which she asserted it. The complaint, therefore, being done away by

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the acceptance of the Spanish Monarch's declaration, the ground of the dispute is consequently changed: the principle on which it began is inverted; and from that instant we came to the great question, unencumbered with any collateral matters, either in regard to the necessity of upholding the honour of the British flag, or any cause of complaint on the part of this country against Spain—whether, in the present situation of Great Britain, it is a wise measure to go to war with half Europe for the fur trade of Nootka Sound?

If the appeal be now made to the sword, it will be no longer a necessary appeal on the part of Great Britain, because it is no longer defensive. He must be a very convenient interpreter of the laws of nations that can state a case of defensive war, in which the country that pretends to be *defending*, attacks another, against which she has solemnly acknowledged that *there exists no cause of complaint*; that such has been atoned for by satisfaction and submission.

No. VI.

September 15, 1790.

THE second advantage which has been given to Spain by Mr. Pitt's system of negotiating, is
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that which arises from her increased power to carry on a war, whenever it shall suit her Cabinet to drive Mr. Pitt into a declaration of it. How much better prepared is she for such a situation at this moment, than she was two months earlier?

I take the period of two months rather than any other for this reason—Spain having had a considerable naval force ready for sea, either before Mr. Pitt knew it, or before he knew what to think of it, we must in fairness allow that some time was necessary to put Great Britain into a posture of defence. The wish and the duty of Administration pointed out to them the necessity of immediately assembling a force sufficient to oppose to that which Spain had in readiness to support her pretensions and her outrages. Thirty sail of line of battle ships was the utmost force which that country could send upon the seas the latter end of July. Thirty sail of line of battle ships, supposed by ministerial statements to be better manned, better appointed, and in all respects fitter for actual service, were then ready to sail from the ports of Britain. If I am indulging a too sanguine expectation in taking it for granted, that, had the two fleets met, a blow must have been given to the Spanish marine, by which her immediate

exertions would have been crippled, and her recovering, for a long period, extremely doubtful, I must blame the Minister and his friends for having held out such hopes to me in common with the rest of my countrymen.

The blow was not struck. Mr. Pitt was engaged in a deep disquisition on the different shades that distinguish the *honour* from the *right*, and the *right* from the *interest* of nations. The leader of the British Cabinet was subtilizing on the subtleties of *Count de Florida Blanca*; and the leader of the British fleet was puzzling the heads of his Captains with a new code of metaphysical signals! Consolatory prospect to those who consider the after-reckoning for an idle parade of filling the seas with ships of war, and the Gazettes with contracts and bankruptcies!

But Spain was employed in the pursuit of great and effectual objects. Very early in the contest she had presented a requisition to the French Ministers, claiming the succours stipulated by her alliance with that country. The hesitation of France, in the first instance, produced the final demand of the Spanish Ambassador to Monsieur de Montmorin, presented to that Minister so early as the 16th of June, and kept back from the National Assembly until the 1st of August. Why it was kept back until that time,

time, the address of the French Cabinet in so doing, and the consequences, together with the curious manner in which they have made Mr. Pitt their dupe, will amply reward us for the trouble of a short digression.

No. VII.

September 16, 1790.

IT is necessary to premise one circumstance peculiar to this negotiation. From the accidental situation of France, the salutary terror of her Ministers on the ground of responsibility, and the determination of the subsisting Legislature to watch over every transaction that may endanger the establishment of their constitution, a number of very important state papers have been voluntarily made public by those entrusted with the direction of affairs in that country. These papers are published in the *Proces Verbal*, which answers to our Journals of Parliament, and is of equal authenticity.

I now proceed to the detail of the manœuvres at Paris which led to the Declaration of the Spanish Court, signed by the Count de Florida Blanca the 24th of July.

Early in the month of May, the King of France addressed a letter to the National Assembly, stating "the dispute between England and Spain,

Spain, the respective armaments of the two countries, and the orders that he had given to equip a squadron of fourteen sail of the line, and to have them in readiness in the ports of the Ocean and the Mediterranean." He further says, "that these steps are merely for the sake of prudence and precaution, that he is confident the peace *between France and Great Britain* cannot be disturbed, *because his Ambassador at the Court of London has been told that the only object of these preparations is the difference between that Court and Spain*: and that his Britannic Majesty desires to preserve the good understanding which subsists so happily between the two Courts."

Alarmed at the contents of this message, but still more at the prospect of being ultimately drawn into a war with England without the smallest grounds of immediate dispute with her, the Assembly, previous to making any provision for the expences of this armament, resolve that
 THE RIGHT OF DECLARING WAR SHALL NOT
 BELONG TO THE EXECUTIVE POWER.

The remonstrances and requisitions from the Spanish Ambassador, who clearly saw the object of this decree, were incessant from that time forward; at length he asks—"What France *can* do in the actual circumstances of the country, to assist Spain?"—He states "that the circumstances

stances of Spain demand a most immediate determination; that the conduct of France must be so active, so clear, and so unequivocal, as to avoid the smallest ground for mistrust. That otherwise Spain must *search for other alliances among the other European powers, without excepting any one of those powers with which, in case of necessity, she can form them.* That in such an event, his Master will pay every attention *that circumstances will permit him to do, to the reciprocal interests of the two countries."*

This firm and intelligible demand is made on the 18th of June; about three weeks after the National Assembly of France had passed the decree by which they rendered a compliance with it impossible. But the French Minister was too much a friend to Spain to present such a requisition at such a moment; he knew, as every body who knew France at that period might easily have perceived, that an immediate dissolution of the Family Compact must be the consequence, if this demand were insisted upon, before the question between England and Spain should have assumed a very different form, and before it should be made clear that Spain was requiring no more than a compliance with the defensive clauses of the treaty. In the discussion, therefore, between the French Cabinet and
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Spanish Minister at Paris, which followed this ultimate requisition, it was made a point, that the captured vessels should be first restored; that the injured parties should be indemnified, and that some sort of an apology should be made to the King of England, for the insult offered to his flag: the precise points which Mr. Pitt *thinks* he has obtained, so much to the credit of his own incredible exertions, matchless ability, and dextrous negotiation!

It must be observed, that this is the official language of Monsieur de Montmorin, speaking to a controuling Assembly to which he was severely responsible for his conduct; that he, therefore, is obliged to give a colour to his official communications with the Spanish Ambassador, to affect a sincere desire for peace, and a regard for justice, which few men will be simple enough to believe, was observed in their confidential conferences.

In pursuance of this wise system, for the praise of wisdom and dexterity belong to those who conducted the effectual negotiation at Paris, Monf. de Montmorin delays, as I have observed, the answer to this requisition for succours; concerts with the Spanish Ambassador a plausible story to tell the National Assembly and Mr. Pitt; gets Mr. Pitt to declare himself most perfectly

fectly satisfied, and not only satisfied, but pleased with it; carries this declaration to the National Assembly in one hand, and the Spanish Ambassador's requisition in the other, having first placed Spain on the defensive in all future discussions with England by persuading Mr. Pitt to give up his complaint; makes the people of Paris believe, *from Mr. Pitt's own words*, that all hostility is at an end; and then accomplishes his grand object of bringing the National Assembly to a resolution, which they vote to all appearance in the abstract, of ADHERING TO THE DEFENSIVE CLAUSES OF THE FAMILY COMPACT!

No. VIII.

September 17, 1790.

SUCH was the manœuvre by which France, notwithstanding her present situation, and her friendly dispositions towards Great Britain, is compelled once more to appear in arms against her: by which the British Minister, while he was gaping for dispatches from Madrid, was entrapped by the efforts of superior talents, and maturer artifice at Paris. Nor has Mons. de Montmorin wholly deceived his country, or led her into impolitic measures. The conduct of

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France is the result of a necessity imposed upon her by the actual circumstances of the negotiation; by Mr. Pitt's division of the two questions, and his making them objects of distinct arrangement; by his concluding the one before he commenced the other; by his declaring himself satisfied, and proving that he was not.

Determining, however, as he did, on this line, it was his business to follow the suggestions of a more vigorous policy. Conscious that he meant to contend for both these points, he should have contended for them at one and the same time: and if the appeal to force had at last become inevitable, in what a superior situation would he have stood! Spain would not then have sounded with impunity the cry of union against Great Britain, in every quarter of Europe. What power could have declared in her favour, supporting, single and unassisted as she then would have been, a war of rapine and violence against mankind? Russia was sufficiently engaged with Sweden. The neutrality of Denmark, at that time, secured in regard to Northern politics, in which she has an immediate interest, was not likely to give way to the remote one of a Spanish connection. Portugal cannot stir, except in concert with all the naval powers of the South. Where then could Spain have

have found an ally, had she searched throughout Europe for one, after having failed to arouse the tardy vigilance and desponding generosity of the French nation?—Or if France had declared openly for her in the early period of this dispute, when her West-India islands were equally without defence against a foreign enemy, and against themselves, exhibiting one general scene of massacre and revolt—what—I may fairly ask—must have been the situation of those possessions at this moment?

No. IX.

September 18, 1790.

IT is not merely to the House of Bourbon that Mr. Pitt was enabled to speak the language of firmness and of justice. The destructive principle asserted during the last war by the Naval Powers of the North, namely, that neutral bottoms shall in all cases make free goods, must have perished in the conflicting interests of those who had confederated to maintain it. In the midst of a war between the two most considerable of those Powers; not a war of commerce, but of mutual and deadly animosity, we might have fairly demanded from Sweden, while our alliance was

useful to her, a formal dereliction of the neutral principle. What right have we to demand it from her now? And what one solitary advantage is Great Britain to expect as a compensation for having sacrificed for ever the valuable alliance of Russia? Our unhappy Statesman has suffered Spain to negotiate a peace between these kingdoms, which restores that formidable league to its first consistency!

Is this the man who holds the balance with a firm hand, and calls himself the arbiter of Europe, while every part of it is filled with negotiations which he does not know, and alliances start up every where against his country? Does he send the British lion to roar at Reichenbach, while her protecting genius on the ocean hides her head beneath its waves, and drops the trident from her grasp? He menaced loudly on the borders of *Bohemia*, where the real and solid interests of Great Britain never could come in question; he talked with decision on the surrender of *Belgrade*, and reasoned with niceness and perspicacity of the claims of the Imperial allies to *Choczim* and *Oczakow*, of the fortrefs of *Widdin*, of the limits of *Wallachia*, of the *Calmucks* and the *Cossacks*, of the *Danube*, the *Dnieper*, and the *Dniester*—names equally foreign to British ears and British interests; he pledged his country

try to his land ally the King of Prussia, that Leopold should not gain a foot of territory on the side of the *Aluta*; but his cheek grew pale at the sound of a French armament at Brest, which his firmness might have prevented, and his imbecility has since provoked.

The aspect of affairs is indeed materially changed. The first shot that is fired against Spain, is equally so against France; and possibly against the same Northern confederacy which, during the last war, was so formidable and fatal to Great Britain. The first shot that had been fired in June, July, or the beginning of August, must have torn asunder the ties of the Family Compact, and, if not wholly annihilated the Northern union, suspended its operation during the course of the war. France would have been then compelled to answer the requisition of Spain, not only before the country was ready to adopt her cause, but while hostilities were actually going forward: her declaration of support would then have been a declaration of war, in which she could not have mixed without calling down an instantaneous mischief upon her head; now, she has the hopes that her powerful mediation may prevent a war; now, her declaration of support is not such an act of hostility as can justify an act of immediate retribution on
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the part of this country; now she is pledged to the performance of engagements most solemnly entered into by her for the *defence* of Spain, at a period in which the question came before her divested of those circumstances, as well of injustice on the part of Spain, as of immediate danger to herself.

No. X.

September 20, 1790.

THE preceding papers, I trust, have made it sufficiently evident, not only that Spain is ready to meet the contest, if such must be the result of our negotiations, with an infinitely more formidable force than she could by any means have opposed to us in the beginning of this dispute, but that her being so is solely imputable to the multiplied mistakes, and the scarcely credible incapacity of Mr. Pitt. Such, indeed, is the strength of the confederacy, at the head of which, even if the dispute were immediately to finish, Spain will stand, that I much doubt whether any possible settlement we can come to in regard to the fur trade of Nootka Sound, including even the reimbursement of our expences, can produce political advantages sufficient to balance it.

I shall

I shall now proceed to that point which it seems is, after all, to constitute the Minister's principal defence. The honour of the British flag is abandoned :—he discovers, at the very found, that he has not wholly forgot to blush. The policy of fighting for the cat-skins of Nootka, the justice of precipitating his taxed country into a war, the character of which throughout Europe would be A WAR OF PIRATES TO PROTECT SMUGGLERS, is wholly abandoned also. Profound and extensive views, far beyond the vulgar simplicity of other Ministers, are ascribed to the enlightened mind of Mr. Pitt :—the Southern whale-fishery, that source of inexhaustible prosperity to the commerce and navigation of Great Britain, is now affirmed to be the material point in the dispute, and the true justification for our immense and profitless exertions.

It comes not within the plan of discussion which I have proposed to myself, to argue from any premises but from such as are established, evident, and in the full possession of the public. What I have to observe, therefore, in regard to the Southern whale fishery, shall be confined simply to certain facts which have long been known ; and which indeed their notoriety would render it unnecessary to revert to, if there was
any

thing like sense or consistency in the reasoning that would exculpate the Minister on this ground. On any other than these facts, I shall wholly avoid to comment ; as it is but fair to say, in the present state of the pending negotiation, that, considered by itself, it may deserve much praise or much blame ; while of the negotiation that is concluded, and now before the public, I repeat the opinion—already impressed, I am persuaded, on the minds of all thinking men—namely, that from the beginning to the end it is a bad first essay of a youthful negotiator, whose talents, however dazzling in their kind, are not those which qualify him for the arduous walk of foreign politics, and who is obliged to learn business by experiments of which the dearest interests of his country are alternately the subject and the sport.

No. XI.

September 23, 1790.

I SHALL now state my reasons for thinking the Southern whale fishery, on the renunciation of which, as an exclusive claim, Mr. Pitt is cunningly laying a foundation for much triumph, to be by no means the leading difficulty
in

in the negotiation now pending with the Court of Spain.

It is an admitted fact, in the first place, that the subjects of Great Britain have never been interrupted, or menaced with interruption, in the exercise of this employment.

In the next, the manner in which the claim is advanced, on the part of Spain, shews evidently that it is thrown in as a mere make-weight to the rest of her complaint. Important as it is, Spain certainly does not think her pretensions so clear as to bear the being put forward alone, and without the assistance of other matters. Just as any individual, when called upon to state his causes of grievance against another, would not only state all he knew, but probably something more than he knew. His Majesty's Message to Parliament on the 5th of May, will illustrate this observation. "The capture of one of these
" vessels had before been notified by the Am-
" bassador of his Catholic Majesty, by order of
" his Court;" [We since have obtained the date of this notification, viz. the 10th of February.] "who at the same time desired that
" measures might be taken for preventing his
" Majesty's subjects from frequenting those
" coasts, which were alledged to have been
" *previously occupied* and frequented by the sub-
F "jects

"jects of Spain. Complaints were also made of
 "the Fisheries carried on by his Majesty's sub-
 "jects in the seas adjoining to the Spanish conti-
 "nent, as being contrary to the Rights of the Crown
 "of Spain." This is all his Majesty's Message
 contains upon the subject, and the opinion his
 Majesty's Ministers entertained of the degree
 of obstinacy with which Spain intended to con-
 test the point with us, and adhere to the exclu-
 sive claim of fishery, is best evinced by their tak-
 ing no further notice of it in any other part of
 the Message; the purport of which is to com-
 plain of the acts of violence, and to desire that Par-
 liament would enable his Majesty to take such
 measures as might be eventually necessary to
 support the honour of his Crown. The Southern
 whale fishery, however important in itself, forms
 but a very inferior part of the dispute then sub-
 sisting between the two Courts. The principle
 too, on which it forms any part of it, admits of
 accommodation more easily than any other, be-
 cause the seizure of the ships at Nootka is
 grounded on an assertion of *prior occupancy* (a
 principle contended for on our part), whereas
 the complaint in regard to the fisheries, slightly
 as it is urged, is diminished to a still less con-
 siderable point of difference, when the nature of
 such a right, and the species of possession and
 occupancy

occupancy of which it is capable, come to be considered. The *measures, which may eventually become necessary*, relate therefore to the point of *full and adequate satisfaction*, which his Majesty says, in his Message, he has *directed his Minister at Madrid to demand*.

No. XII.

September 24, 1790.

IN confirmation of my former reasoning, I shall beg to repeat, and insist upon the circumstance, that this fishery, stated by Mr. Pitt in his Budget to be the source of such infinite importance to the commercial and maritime interests of the country, never experienced any hostile interruption on the part of Spain; disposed, as from recent examples it appears that she was, not very quietly to put up with any direct invasion of her rights. Compare her conduct in this instance with the line she pursued at Nootka. In the *seas adjoining the Spanish continent* she has suffered a fishery to be established by British subjects, and gradually to increase in a proportion so formidable, as in a few years to become a part of *the permanent wealth of the country*. At Nootka

she seized and confiscated the property, and imprisoned the settlers, the very first moment she found any there. What stronger evidence can exist of the opinion entertained by Spain in respect to the validity of her pretensions, and which of the two she deemed indefensible?

But if any thing further were wanting to render this reasoning conclusive, we may look for it in Mr. Pitt's own words the day of the debate on his Majesty's Message: words, not casually and unguardedly thrown out, extorted from him in the acrimony of debate, but earnestly pronounced at the moment of his utmost need, relied on by him as his sole defence against the attack which he had provoked, by having stated the probability of peace on the Budget-day, when he was supposed to have known that hostile claims had been advanced, and hostile acts committed.

"The Right Hon. Gentleman," said he, (speaking of Mr. Fox) "is mistaken in his statement of the circumstances to which he refers. The Right Hon. Gentleman says, *We knew every thing when the Budget was opened that we know now.* The case is directly the reverse. We knew nothing of the facts in question, except what we knew FROM THE COMMUNICATION OF THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR, which

“ which was extremely vague, and related only
 “ to the capture of one of the vessels, *and that*
 “ *without the particulars.*”

Was it the knowledge of these *particulars* that made the mighty difference?—Did the *communication of the Spanish Ambassador* inform Mr. Pitt of nothing else that was likely to produce a war? Admitting the facts (which, except for the sake of argument, I am by no means disposed to do), namely, that until the arrival of Captain Mears’s Memorial, he knew not of those acts of outrage and injustice which compelled him since to seek reparation at the point of the sword, he knew positively the claim of Spain, such as it was, to the Southern whale fishery. *That* we have from the King’s Message. But was the sort of claim then advanced, and the manner in which it is spoken of in the *Communication of the Spanish Ambassador* so very serious, as to make Mr. Pitt believe it likely that Spain would go to war about it? He himself, if one can credit a single syllable of what he says, tells us No, and relies upon this negative for his defence against one of the most serious charges ever produced in Parliament against a Minister. Demonstration itself can throw no new light upon the subject; and I advert to it in an early period, because I know the tricks of this Minister,

ster, and that his whole conduct in every political concern of his life is nothing but a trap for popularity. To cover the poverty of his measures, he will arrogate immense credit to himself, at the end of the negotiation, for having secured to Great Britain what never was seriously disputed with her; he will boast of having strengthened the sinews of British commerce and navigation by the addition of the Southern whale fishery, with a scarcely better right to boast of it, than if the Newfoundland fisheries had been acknowledged to belong to us. When he comes to Parliament, as he very possibly may, with a Convention from Spain in one hand, and his accounts of four millions expended in the other, he will think it a fair answer to every possible objection, to say—"Look at my Convention, acknowledging your right to fish in the Spanish seas: look at the 3 per cents. at 81."—Upon some such empty, shallow title, we shall see pagnyrick exhausted, extravagance itself outstripped, and new terms of adulation invented for the glorious Minister who will have done all this!—Have done what?—Who will have obtained a point which he acknowledges not to have been such an object of contest as to make *him* apprehend the least chance of a rupture with Spain when it was stated by her.

No. XIII.

September 28, 1790.

THAT the Family Compact would not have been affirmed ; that the Northern Confederacy could not have been renewed, if Mr. Pitt had finished his dispute with Spain when he might have done it, from the situation in which she stood, both in point of right and in point of preparation, are facts of which those who attend to political occurrences cannot entertain a doubt. That there is no just reason to think Spain would have continued the dispute, in a state of hostility, on the subject of the fisheries, must be equally clear to those who have attended to the proceedings of Ministers in this country. If, by fair statements from authentic documents, I have proved him the egregious dupe of a private negotiation at Paris, I hope the public will give me credit for having detailed that fact, more with a view to the mischief the country will suffer by his being so, than with any design injurious to his fame, or painful to his vanity.

What could have induced him to pursue a conduct which involves him, of necessity, in such a labyrinth of embarrassments, were otherwise a speculation

speculation of more curiosity than importance. The true and only line seemed to obtrude itself upon the understanding, and required a species of address to miss, rather than to discover it. His Majesty of Prussia could have given him some excellent advice on this head. “ Never
 “ think, he would have said, of “ *giving up your*
 “ *cause of complaint!*—Nurse the insult you have
 “ received, encourage the continuance of it while
 “ you have any matters to settle with the Court
 “ of Spain. What did I do, in a similar situa-
 “ tion? My ambition and my Ministers told
 “ me, in the year 1787, that I ought to take ad-
 “ vantage of the distracted state of the Dutch
 “ Republic, and, by one bold and decisive
 “ stroke, secure my own influence in it for ever.
 “ The advice was good, but the execution of it
 “ difficult. A forcible interference in the do-
 “ mestic politics of an independent state would
 “ have alarmed Europe. I searched for a pre-
 “ tence, and found one at last, though it was but
 “ shallow.—I caused my sister to undertake a
 “ clandestine expedition to the Hague, in the
 “ execution of which I knew she would be in-
 “ terrupted. All succeeded to my wishes. Her
 “ person was seized. I pretended to demand sa-
 “ tisfaction as her brother, while in reality I de-
 “ manded the government of the republic, as its
 “ master.

" master. Apologies were offered me, but I
 " would accept none that did not involve the
 " re-instatement of the Stadtholder in all his
 " rights and dignities. I did not timidly sepa-
 " rate the question of *satisfaction for the insult*
 " from the real object of my interference in his
 " affairs, but marched my troops to Amsterdam,
 " before France could have time to declare her-
 " self. You assisted my views, and should
 " know better how to deal with the Court of
 " Spain."

No. XIV.

September 29, 1790.

SENTIMENTS such as these decided the
 conduct of Frederick William, and insured his
 success. I am far from applauding the crafty
 policy of a tyrant at the head of an hundred
 thousand men, eager for his prey, and searching
 only the pretext to seize it: I am far from pro-
 posing the manner in which he courted an in-
 sult to the person of his sister, to the imitation of
 the British Minister; but when the Court of
 Spain had actually, and without just provoca-
 tion, committed an outrageous insult towards

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this country, I affirm that it was an unwise conduct in him, and exemplifies something more faulty than a confused head, to divide this insult, in his negotiations, from the right asserted by Spain to act in the same manner whenever the occasion may suit her, and acknowledge himself *perfectly satisfied* before he had obtained any security against the recommission of it.

But it is not for the illumined mind of Mr. Pitt to bend either to the examples of illustrious men, or the successful practice of his predecessors. Hitherto, where a Sovereign, the guardian of his people, has been compelled to demand reparation for an insult offered to his honour and rights, the first step to such reparation has been a formal disavowal, on the part of the adverse Sovereign, of any authority from him to commit the acts complained of. Such *was* obtained from Spain in the affair of Falkland's Islands. Her disavowal was explicit, complete, and, as far as it went, satisfactory: Whether it embraced all the points of complaint then existing between the two Courts, is foreign to the purpose. It was the more mortifying to Spanish arrogance, as the seizure of the settlement, and dispossession of the British inhabitants, was done in a regular hostile manner, under all the forms of open war in which inferior force submits, without

without dishonour, to its superior. There, the disavowal contained no opposite stipulations for the right—no equivocal explanation of general orders—no protecting *salvo* for the honour of the Spanish Monarch. The atonement came in the very seat of the affront. A particular expedition fitted out in the face of Europe, sailing from a Spanish port, commanded by a commissioned Officer, was stigmatized in the face of Europe with the names of piracy and plunder by its author; and Spain was humbled by the surrender of her national claim, and of her national veracity.

I shall expose the degrading contrast in a few remarks on the Declaration and Counter-Declaration, signed by Mr. Fitzherbert and the Count de Florida Blanca.

No. XV.

October 1, 1790.

MANY observations which apply to the insufficiency of the Spanish declaration, considered merely as an apology for the insult, have necessarily been anticipated in the course of these papers. I the less regret my having but a few

more to press upon the public attention, because the general opinion of impartial men is already formed upon the subject, and almost as much to Mr. Pitt's disadvantage as his improvident conduct can deserve.

Those who examine the political life of this Minister must have remarked, that whenever he has a point to carry, or is engaged in any important transaction, his measures are usually preceded by the diligent circulation of some popular and lofty sentiment, which, while it captivates the public ear, serves as a *phrase of union*, a sort of *watch-word*, to those who have the task of defending and admiring him. Of this sort is the childish, unmeaning cry, echoed by his partisans in the House of Commons, and re-echoed with a ridiculous industry to the people, OF SATISFACTION PREVIOUS TO DISCUSSION:—one of those obscure combinations of sound which Mr. Pitt never understood himself, and never meant should be understood by others.

For the present, however, let us meet him on his own ground: let us examine how he has conducted himself, after establishing the principle from which he meant to deduce all subsequent proceedings with the Court of Spain. Liberal in our admissions, we will agree, first, that his principle was intelligible; secondly, that it
was

was correct : that the question of honour allowed itself to be separated from the right, and that satisfaction for the first was indispensable before the commencement of any enquiry into the second.

It will, I imagine, hardly be disputed with me, that the separation ought, in all its points, to have been *complete* : the ideas on which it was founded, distinct : the consequences, blended in no way one with the other. As little will it be denied that the species of satisfaction to be required by the British Court ought to have been equally *clear, definite, and unmixed*. Possessing such requisites, it became one of these questions, so rarely occurring in politics, which admit of no negotiation : effectually steering clear of those undecisive distinctions under which one *ultimatum* (as it is called) lingers after the other, and must inevitably continue to do so, unless the Minister departs materially from his first ground, and quickens the dreaming conferences of Mr. Fitzherbert by resolutions at home, renouncing that inactive system to which he bound himself when he accepted the Declaration I am examining. Such were Mr. Pitt's ideas, and such were his promises. The affront once established, the necessity for *immediate* reparation followed. It is with him, therefore, to account to his country,

why

why he admitted this necessity to be demurred to for three months by the Court of Spain? If, during that period, an investigation of facts and of right had been going on, with a view to determine whether any insult had been committed or not, I should be satisfied. But Mr. Pitt denies me this. "Not one word of the right," says he, "previous to the apology!" Captain Mears's Memorial, the document on which the *complaint of Great Britain for the insult offered to her flag* is founded, was in Mr. Pitt's possession the 13th of April. That complaint, according to Mr. Pitt, was simple; stood entirely on its own ground; and was capable of immediate atonement on the one hand, or of a positive denial on the other. How is it then, that no such atonement, or any apology for an atonement (Mr. Pitt is fond of distinctions), was offered until the end of July? I have already stated the true reason in the seventh number of these discussions; and that it was at last conceded by Spain at the instigation of the French Ministry, with a view to procure the adhesion of the National Assembly of France to the defensive clauses of the Family Compact. But under what pretence did Mr. Pitt allow the Spanish Minister so much time to deceive him in?—Was he ignorant what to demand by way of satisfaction? He will not
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acknowledge it if he was. Did he fairly grant the Court of Spain so much time to deliberate? Scarcely so weak as to grant it them in terms, although their conduct demonstrates that they took it. Did he vary in the objects of his demand, and leave it to his Ambassador to make them out as well as he could? The plain truth is, that this delicate matter, any negotiation about which, according to Mr. Pitt, could not be suffered without a fresh wound to the dignity of the British nation, was after all settled by a very long negotiation. Had it been otherwise, the return of his first Messenger would have been decisive.

To be commonly consistent with himself, it was his business to have admitted but of one negotiation, namely, that which was to follow his point of honour. But he departs from his plan, and his promise; and how many more negotiations we are now to be indulged with, depends no longer upon him.

I should not have condemned his recantation from principles which I think erroneous, if he had done the next best thing, and, consenting to negotiate the affront, had negotiated the right at the same time. The state of affairs at this moment will sufficiently evince the degree of

error and absurdity in which the separating these questions has involved him.

No. XVI.

October 4, 1790.

IN Mr. Pitt's first speech, explanatory of his Majesty's Message to Parliament, he declared, "that he should consider no satisfaction adequate, which did not include the prevention of future insults from the Spaniards." From this principle it appears that he thought it expedient to recede, and Mr. Fitzherbert's counter declaration announces the direct reverse.

For after all that can be said in favour of these wise men, when we come to plain facts, their conduct will appear precisely the same as I originally stated it. The language of the *high contracting parties* is simply this:—

MR. PITT.

"I shall consider no satisfaction adequate that does not preclude future disputes."

KING OF SPAIN.

"I am ready to restore your ships, but assert my right to capture as many more as I please."

Mr.

Mr. PITT.

“ We will talk of that afterwards ; at present I declare myself satisfied with your promise.”

Here we shall observe that the satisfaction which Mr. Pitt proposed to obtain for us, never could in its nature be complete ; and for the following plain reasons :—

First—That from the instant he established two distinct principles for his negotiations, and two distinct periods for commencing and concluding them, he precluded himself from obtaining from Spain a public *disavowal* of the conduct of her officers ; that point being, according to better opinions, inseparably connected with that of the *right to the possession* of the settlement, or territory in dispute.

Secondly—That by confining his ideas of “ adequate satisfaction” to the preclusion of future disputes, he abandoned all his claims to reparation for the past. For that if the right was ours at any time, it clearly was so at the commission of the outrages complained of. If, therefore, the settlement of this point, so as only to prevent future indignities, was to be put off to a second negotiation, and satisfaction acknowledged on our part previous to the commencement, even, of that second negotiation, no pro-

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vision could be made for the affront under which we have been aching ever since the 10th of February. A disavowal, indeed, would have cured this; but under the present circumstances there must ever exist a chasm in the proceedings which no future arrangement can supply. The narrow ground taken at first by Mr. Pitt was contracted still more by the necessity under which he placed himself of accepting a satisfaction, inadequate, according to himself.

But under every admission I can make him, the necessity of a disavowal will appear indispensable. Let it be supposed that the right to form exclusive settlements in Nootka Sound belongs to Spain, and that this point ascertained, a reasoning man should affirm that we had sustained no insult.—What would Mr. Pitt say to this?—
 “No insult! Are not the circumstances of aggravation insults? Is not the imprisonment of
 “British subjects, and the cruelty exercised upon
 “on their persons, an outrage which it becomes
 “their countrymen to resent? I felt it as such,
 “and so did Parliament; and so completely independent of the right did I feel it, that I will
 “have satisfaction for it, whether the right is in
 “me or not.”—What would be the answer according to the dictates of common sense, and the practice of nations? “Wherever there is an insult,

“ sult, there must be a disavowal on the part of
 “ the Sovereign under whose authority it appears
 “ to have been committed.” I should be glad
 to see this principle controverted:

The necessity of a disavowal, therefore, applies to both cases; with this simple difference, that if it were the result of a negotiation conducted upon the principles of a well-understood policy, extensive in its views, and spirited in the assertion of them, it would go to the extent of acknowledging a right in Great Britain to that particular settlement in Nootka Sound, in the possession of which they were disturbed; and if it were the result of a negotiation conducted upon the more narrow principles established by Mr. Pitt, a disavowal would be the first step to reparation, and part of a necessary apology from the King of Spain for those indignities which, under no possible circumstances, his subjects can have a right to offer to the British flag.

No. XVII.

October 6, 1790.

IF the circumstances of the times, and the transactions which have led to them, were not of

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an importance equal to whatever can happen to us within the compass of political events, I should deem it incumbent upon me to apologize to the Public for renewing any demand upon their indulgence on points so clear, that to be proved they require but to be discriminated. Less, however, than a continued, undissipated attention to the method in which Mr. Pitt has conducted his negotiation, will not avail, if we mean fairly to try him on the principles we contend to be correct, as well as on those which he has established for himself. It is not the investigation of an hour that can detect the latent intricacies of a confused and contradictory system of conducting the national affairs. The man who limits his observations to the general fallacy and inexpediency of such a system, has a task infinitely less difficult, and less painful, than he who pursues the mischief from its source, through the detail of its perplexities, and the disgusting sophistry of its perversions. But in this period of a dispute, pregnant, as I fear, with every calamity which can befall a country, the closeness of such an inquiry appears to me indispensable. The day approaches in which a Minister, who has hitherto had no one serious difficulty to encounter, will find that his situation is not so totally exempt from

from them, but that the *good, easy* people of this country, ever ready almost to give popularity to power, will exact, when they begin to feel, a severe responsibility for the use of it. On these grounds, while the author of important measures can be produced before he is disguised; before the country forgets, in its misfortunes, the true cause which has led to them; before that cause is sheltered under an all-absorbing INFLUENCE, which has baffled every popular exertion, and nearly extirpated all popular principle, to point out, and ascertain him, becomes one of the most necessary acts of public duty. Little accustomed to despair of the natural energy of my country, I shall soon see awakened among us the same generous ardour that unites for the common good, and the same active, inquisitive, persevering spirit, that ever proves fatal to weak and wicked ministers.

The complicated errors of Mr. Pitt have placed us in a situation so truly alarming, that I must profess myself too much in earnest to relax from the developement of those false and fatal principles in which they originate; or to desist from exposing still further the trifling inanity of a measure that betrays at the same time the incorrectness of a statesman's mind without his genius

nus, and the minuteness of a lawyer's without his method.

Such is the negotiation, the character of which we are to look for in the Gazette Extraordinary of August.—This is the document that contains the extent, the quality, the ALL in short, of the satisfaction obtained, or at any time to be obtained, for the insults and injuries sustained by the King of Great Britain and his subjects.

On the side of *that insulted and injured Monarch*, his Minister declares himself content with the restoration of the captured ships; and with these words, the meaning of which I shall shortly have occasion to examine,—“ His Catholic Majesty is willing to give satisfaction for the *injury* of which he has complained, fully persuaded his Britannic Majesty would act in the same manner towards the King [of Spain] under similar circumstances.”

On the side of that Monarch, who is the author of a gross and outrageous insult, described by Mr. Pitt himself in terms of the most marked atrocity, his Minister declares him content to acknowledge that he is in the wrong, subject to the decision of his asserted right, which nothing in his declaration, he says, shall prejudice. He is ready also to restore the captured British ships,
and

and to indemnify the parties for their loss, as soon as they can *ascertain the amount of it*.

No. XVIII.

October 8, 1790.

WHAT, therefore, has the King of Spain conceded to Great Britain? Examine his Declaration under the three heads of—

1. Atonement to the King for the affront which he has received.
2. Restoration of the captured vessels.
3. Indemnification to the sufferers for their losses.

On the first of these points it will appear, that the reservation of right on the part of his Catholic Majesty completely vitiates the apologizing part of his Declaration, and renders it, as such, totally null and nugatory, *ab initio*. It is a conditional satisfaction for a formal, deliberate, and avowed insult. Mr. Pitt's very laboured separation between that which constitutes a national insult, and that which amounts only to a simple injury, has not been overlooked by the King of Spain. Accordingly he has adapted his offer of satisfaction precisely to "*the injury of which his Britannic Majesty has complained.*"

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What was the exact and specific wrong stated by him we are not informed by any authentic instrument of his Ministers ;—we must collect it, therefore, as we have an undoubted right to do, from the paper under consideration. In this we cannot err ; for if the matter of complaint be not faithfully referred to in the instrument which professes to be a satisfaction for such complaint, then is there a radical objection to the whole of its contents considered under any possible point of view.

But if it be faithfully referred to in the King of Spain's Declaration, the injury complained of will be found to relate simply to "*the capture of certain vessels belonging to his (Britannic Majesty's) subjects in the port of Nootka.*"

Should it be said that his Catholic Majesty thinks otherwise, and that his promise to restore the ships and indemnify the parties, as a *further* satisfaction, necessarily supposes another species of atonement, I answer, that from the very terms in which he makes the promise, the performance of it is impossible. Were it promised for the *insult* so loudly resounded, then it might be a question, what further atonement would be requisite ? But promised as it is, for the *injury* of which the King has complained, which *injury* is specifically referred to, and described to be "*the capture*

capture of certain vessels belonging to his subjects in the port of Nootka," the King of Spain precludes us from advancing any claim independent of that which naturally connects itself with the injury, and which will resolve itself at last into a satisfaction absolutely pecuniary.

I confess, that these distinctions are nice, and new in the history of negotiations. But who is the author of them? A statesman who has forgotten every thing but that he was once a pleader—who has involved the great interests of nations in the subtleties, and the delay of a suit in Equity—splitting cases with the Count de *Florida Blanca* while he was losing one alliance, rendering another precarious, and raising up on all sides a formidable maritime confederacy, against which Great Britain can be successful in no war she ever undertakes.

No. XIX.

October 11, 1790.

THAT the satisfaction offered by Spain is conditional on her part, will appear from those remarkable words in the Declaration, which Mr. Fitzherbert admits without any reserve, any explanatory sentence, or even any notice, "*persuaded that his Britannic Majesty would act in the*

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same

same manner towards the King under similar circumstances." What is meant by "similar circumstances?" Clearly, under a similar invasion of the *rights* of Spain. Now, as Spain has reserved her claim to this very right, the supposed invasion of which constitutes the offence for which an apology has been demanded from her, and as Great Britain has consented to enter into the discussion of this claim, and abide by the determination of it, if the fact should eventually turn out to be that the settlement in dispute is to all intents and purposes the property of Spain on the principle of prior occupancy, I ask whether, under this admitted reservation coupled with the words extracted from the Declaration, the Spanish Monarch will not have good reason to expect an apology from his Britannic Majesty for disturbing him in his rightful possessions?—That I am warranted in this conclusion will appear still further by the addition of an extract from a document which the Ministers will scarcely undervalue. We know very well that on some occasions they are not above a communication with newspapers. Perhaps no set of men that ever held official situations have made a more direct use of those channels of intelligence, whenever they have had particular purposes to answer by it. Very soon after the Gazette Extraordinary made

made its appearance, two papers, purporting to contain the grounds on which the first negotiation was concluded, and the Spanish apology was promised, were laid before the Public through the medium of those *chosen prints* in which the triumphs of the Minister commonly keep pace with his wishes: thence they were transposed into others, and are now in universal circulation. These curious documents—on which I regret my not being able to bestow the particular attention they so richly merit—are signed, the one “ALLEYNE FITZHERBERT,” and the other “DE FLORIDA BLANCA.” Of their authenticity there is no dispute. The last of them contains the three explanatory propositions, under either of which the King of Spain is content to offer satisfaction for the injury done to the King of Great Britain. From Mr. Fitzherbert’s dispatches it appears that he chose the third, which deserves the more to be transcribed, as it will display in their true colours Mr. Pitt’s *boldness, consistency, and regard* for the *insulted honour* of his country.

3d. “The said satisfaction will be given,
 “provided it shall not be understood to follow
 “as a consequence that Spain has renounced
 “*any of her rights* in this business, any more
 “than the right which she has to require a satisfaction

“ faction equal or equivalent, if it were proved
 “ in an amicable negotiation that the King is
 “ entitled to demand it for the real and actual
 “ aggression and injury of *an usurpation of Spanish*
 “ *territory* in contravention of Treaties.”

Under this explanation of the *Count de Florida Blanca*, the apology was accepted; an apology which, when Mr. Pitt meets the Parliament, he will no doubt maintain not only to be *complete, satisfactory, and distinct* from the question of right, but to have been extorted from the humbled Spaniard *previous to any sort of discussion whatever!*

No. XX.

October 13, 1790.

WILL it after this be credited by men of sense, that Mr. Pitt ever did, in fact, commit himself to such an hazardous Declaration?—that he ever seriously had resolved *to consider all satisfaction inadequate which should not preclude future disputes?* One universal murmur on all sides seems to rise, as if by common consent, in
 utter

utter denial of its possibility. Even those who are in the habit of opposing the general system of his Administration, from a liberal difference of political opinion, will persuade themselves with difficulty that a word so loose could ever have passed his lips. They will call upon me to pardon the defective vigilance of human reason ; —to allow for the uncertainty of human memory :—while I shall incur the censure of his friends for uncandidly suppressing the explanation, which, without a doubt, he must have given. No such thing! In the sentence I have quoted there is no captious distortion of his words—no partial remembrance of half an argument for the convenience of present crimination. Hundreds, as well as myself, heard the unpropitious avowal. No hypothetical *proviso*—no lurking, oracular ambiguity, shaded beneath the mysterious construction of a sentence, will open to him a retreat from it :—not the last hope of friendless and forlorn duplicity—the wonder working IF—whose more than magic characters can invert the order of moral things, and change the very nature of truth itself. The dissingenuous phrase has but one sense, and in contradiction to that sense Mr. Pitt has acted.

Nor would the doubt be less of his having positively insisted on “ *satisfaction previous to discussion,* ”

“*son.*” But I have many grave authorities for the truth of this, and in the foremost rank of them stands our most insulted Monarch himself, speaking by his Minister’s advice.

“ In consequence of this line of communication, (viz. the Spanish Minister’s Memorial of the 10th of February), a demand was *instantly* made, by his Majesty’s order, for adequate satisfaction, and for restitution of the vessels *previous to ANY other discussion.*”

In the second, stands a statesman “*lesser than MACBETH, and greater.*”—The growing hopes of that celebrated faction, the members of which decently distinguish themselves by the name of *King’s Friends*, in opposition to the rest of the King’s subjects—I mean *Mr. William Wyndham Grenville*; a Minister who, in the art of writing letters to Lord Mayors, has in no wise degenerated from the sagacity and secrecy of his predecessor: the matter of whose communications forms so admirable a relief to the brilliancy of his style, that I imagine, however vain presumption might have once looked forward to the moment in which it should emulate Lord Sydney with success, all such idle prospects must be now sunk in eternal night under the ascending star of the present Home Secretary of State.

From him the First Magistrate of the first commercial

mercial city in the world, and its anxious merchants, are informed, with an exemplary impatience, proportioned to the importance of a suspense, which, with much mischief to their interests, had fluctuated for nearly six months between their hopes and their alarms, that the Ministers of the two Courts were just going to begin "*the discussion of the matters depending between them.*" And in the fulness of his heart he tells the Lord Mayor "*that a Gazette Extraordinary is to be published, and that his Lordship shall have it as soon as it is printed.*"

What am I believe under these authorities, but that, previous to the Declarations, NO MATTERS DEPENDING BETWEEN THE TWO COURTS had been discussed or entered upon? that instead of interchanging messengers by dozens with the Court of Spain between the 10th of February and the 5th of August, one resolute demand, simple, intelligible, unmixed with other matters, had been made for *instant* satisfaction? That instead of writing bad letters to the Count de Florida Blanca, Mr. Fitzherbert from his arrival at Madrid had maintained the silent reserve of a manly and offended dignity, avoiding even a second communication with the Court of that Monarch, who had dealt a dishonest blow to his Master? Coupled with Mr. Pitt's declaration of
what

what he meant by "adequate satisfaction," what am I to think of his illustrious cousin, who tells me that satisfaction being acknowledged, the Ministers of the respective Courts were "*thereupon*" proceeding to discuss the disputed matters with a view to the arrangement which was in future to preclude them?

No. XXI.

October 15, 1790.

SHALL it now be objected to me, in extenuation of this criminal delay, that to limit the time within which satisfaction ought to have been acknowledged, is pressing Ministers too hard—that some difficulties must have occurred before the nature of the proposed satisfaction could be agreed upon, and that for this reason it was impossible to come at once to a decisive issue? I wave all other answer (although many occur to me) but that which I am enabled to give from Mr. Fitzherbert's correspondence.

"For the rest," he says—"as to the nature of
 "the satisfaction which the Court of London re-
 "quires

“quires on this occasion, and *on which your Ex-*
 “*cellency appeared to desire some explanation*, I
 “have been authorised to assure you, that if his
 “Catholic Majesty consented to cause a Declara-
 “tion to be given, expressing in substance that
 “his Majesty was resolved to offer to his Britan-
 “nic Majesty a just and adequate satisfaction for
 “the injury done to the honour of his flag, *such*
 “*an offer* joined to a promise of restitution of
 “the vessels captured, &c. &c.—*will be regarded*
 “*by his Britannic Majesty as constituting in itself*
 “*the satisfaction demanded.*”

On what other testimony would it be believed,
 that any set of men, who ever pretended to
 conduct public business, had suffered themselves
 to be so laughed at by those with whom they
 were negotiating, as to admit the *demand of an*
explanation on such a proposition as this? or,
 with such a cause as ours then was, to acquiesce
 in the raising of so poor a difficulty, and in a
 system of such undisguised prevarication? With
 the British Minister, in this instance, there could
 be none. He—modest negotiator—engages to
 be satisfied with a little. *Projecit ampullas et ses-*
quipedalia verba—Promise that you are ready to
 give satisfaction, and that shall constitute satis-
 faction—is the unoffending language of Mr. Pitt
 to the Spanish Monarch—to that dark and in-
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human tyrant who had trampled under his feet the dearest rights of which an Englishman can boast—who had robbed British subjects of their property—who had cruelly confined and tortured their persons—acts which, if their own Monarch had dared to do, ————— who did not wait to be asked for a disavowal of the deed, but insultingly pressed forward by his Ambassador at the British Court to acknowledge and to justify it.—Yet this bold and decisive Minister——this descendant of the illustrious CHATHAM—at a season of life in which every generous sentiment, in other minds, is animated and enterprising—this vigorous and spirited protector of his Sovereign's honour and his fellow subjects unalienable rights, allows such an enemy to hold off from February to August before he subscribes even to the innocent condition of declaring that he is ready to make satisfaction.

Astonished almost to stupefaction at such an instance of unexampled imbecility, I must here suspend the progress of these remarks, to ask, upon what degraded representation of the British character Mr. Pitt can indulge the prospect of a moment's applause? Does he believe that a general political depravity, the peculiar vice of his domestic administration, has extended its influence

fluence to the feelings as well as to the opinions of men?—Has it been whispered to him, “ The blow you struck to the importance of Parliament has involved a very natural change in the manners of the people. New principles, suitable to the scenes of which we were then witnesses, have grown up with us from that period, and prepare us for the approbation of any measures you may pursue. Many of those who really loved the Constitution saw nothing, after it, that could interest their regard. An accommodating desertion of a post too difficult for their virtue, secured the moderate men. They shrunk back from another ten years trial; from a life of perseverance unsustained by hope, and of honour that was likely to remain its own reward. The fixed and unalterable enemies to liberty were active in the mean time. A popular delusion had sanctioned some of their principles. Possessed of power, they made the rest follow. Violation of the first principles of election—discouragement of the popular trial by Jury—the freedom of the press undermined by restrictions multiplied almost every sessions—new and arbitrary revenue laws copied from the cast-off despotism of French finance—the extension of the excise—the army establishment augmented regularly in time of peace, and its

force concentrated still more in the executive power—the public money squandered on fortifications expressly against a vote of Parliament—the prerogative of creating Peers most indecently bartered with the marketable power of creating Members of the House of Commons, and the benches of the Lords filled with your college friends, or your college tutors—these are some of the leading measures which will immortalize the six first years of your Administration. For us, indeed, we complained but little; for the old, sturdy English energy, which, some years earlier, would have made the authors of such deeds a memorable example to posterity, perished with the dignity of its representing body. That lofty popular spirit which was used to circulate from the head to the members, to pervade, animate, and vivify the whole frame, is become torpid. Disabled from resistance at first, we are at length resigned. From indolent we are changed to patient. There is a fashion even in politics; and while you have been successively destroying the vital principles of our constitution, while the evidence of every day discovers some new imposition which had been masked under the boasted purity of your name, you have not the less established a maxim which must sustain you in this eventful hour, that

“ POPU-

**“ POPULARITY BELONGS NEITHER
TO CONDUCT NOR TO CHARACTER.”**

No. XXII.

October 18, 1790.

YET even were we thus fallen from the ancient dignity of our public character, some argument, some excuse for such a conduct would still be requisite. Men retain their habits long after they are lost to principle; and I much doubt, even under the last of their disgraces, whether the people of England could be easily persuaded that they have no business with the folly or wickedness of their Ministers. An insulting silence would not fail to revive in them the dear and dangerous memory of their former importance. No cautious Minister will risque it. What he cannot deny, he must explain; what he cannot justify, he must extenuate. The darling appeal to his character is urged in vain. Driven from one intrenchment to the other, he will at last resolve the whole into STATE-SECRECY: However anxious, he may describe himself, for his private fame, he will refer us to the superior necessity of his public duty. But if Mr. Pitt possessed twenty times the capacity I am ready to allow him, on the
subject

subject of State-Secrecy he could advance nothing new, nothing that, in the phrase of a man he much resembles, "*the meanest of his predecessors*" has not worn out in THE CAUSE before him.

He has not, however, a friend more ready to applaud the useful secrecy of his measures than I am. Independent of the propriety of putting a check to the destructive speculations of monied men, in times of difficulty and alarm I know of how much importance it is to the energy of the executive government, that its designs, as well as its deliberations, should be sedulously veiled from the public eye. But good policy demands that even this claim should have its limits. Stretched beyond what reason will bear, it will fail of its best purpose. In the same degree that the human mind yields a ready obedience to a rational system of faith, it turns away with disgust from bigotry and imposture. Politicks, as well as religion, produce us men who must subsist upon the misguided passions of the vulgar. State-craft, as well as priest-craft—the mountebank and the monk—even to this day, have spread the mantle of mystery and superstition over mankind. The agents of the one, and the missionaries of the other, work with the same tools, succeed by the same frauds, build upon

upon the same credulous ignorance, and are alike the ridicule and contempt of an enlightened philosophy. Enveloped in impenetrable clouds, their conduct is kept from the public eye, after, as well as before, the end of it is answered. For they argue, and not unwisely, that if the sanctuary were once profaned, if the materials of a single miracle were discovered, not one miracle of them all would escape the derision, and perhaps the fury of the multitude.

But such characters cannot for long be mistaken. There are infallible tokens, which at all times distinguish and betray them.——Whenever, therefore, we find a man, born with every dazzling qualification for officiating as the high-priest to some wooden god whose temple no mortal must invade, but who, from the accidents of his fate, is elevated into political life and becomes a Minister, we shall not fail to see him guard all access to publick information with a jealous and unremitting vigilance. In office, he will pledge himself to no set of measures; he will connect himself with no set of men. In his parliamentary speeches, we shall trace no definite meaning; in his foreign negotiations, he will be irresolute and false. A Statesman of this stamp will succeed in *quiet times*. Where no external mischief presses, he can play off the machinery
of

of government without interruption ; and at the last moment, when foreign danger threatens, and the alarm is sounded at the threshold, he will snatch *the secrets of the prison-house* from discovery, and kindle the pile with his own hand which must consume at once his miracles, his divinity, and himself.

No. XXIII.

October 20, 1790.

IT is not, therefore, difficult to foresee, that State secrecy, State necessity, and implicit Confidence, will be the topics of exculpatory defence for Mr. Pitt from all the inconsistencies of his measures. But something more is due to the gravity of constitutional enquiry. We, who are not used to consider a concluded negotiation as a matter so wonderfully sacred, or to annex ideas of profound and speculative doubt to what is in itself so simple ; who, free from the tyranny of opinion, can approach the red box of a Secretary of State without any sentiments of reverential awe, and who receive not the mysteries of Diplomatic revelation like the articles of a religious creed, or the orthodox communications of a Divine will, seriously shall demand to know, why, in the imposing situation in which his
country

country then stood, Mr. Pitt suffered himself to be amused into a surrender of his Sovereign's honour, and of the rights and dearest interests of the people? Or why the man, who pretended to think that honour so nice a point as not to hear of a negotiation about it, contents himself at last with a conditional satisfaction for the injury it has sustained, and even that amounting to no more than a readiness to make satisfaction, expressed by the King of Spain?

I have but a few more observations to add upon the remaining heads—

II. The King of Spain agrees to restore the British vessels.

No principle is asserted here. The restoration of the captured vessels was a voluntary act of the King of Spain, always under the reservation of his right. That the mere act of restoring them includes no satisfaction, I assume from his Majesty's message, in which the distinction is expressly made.

III. The King of Spain agrees to indemnify the sufferers for the losses *they shall prove* themselves to have sustained in *their property*.

What they will be able to prove—what is to be the nature of the proof which may be agreed upon between Commissioners appointed by the re-

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spective

spective Monarchs—or whether any difficulties can possibly arise on this point, are questions which I stoop not to examine. All objections are lost in his disgraceful abandonment of that which ought to stand foremost in the exacted reparation; in his scandalous submission to the most biting and corrosive part of the insult we have sustained—I mean—A CORPORAL PUNISHMENT INFLICTED UPON BRITISH SUBJECTS.

What? is the glorious Minister *satisfied* when he knows that his fellow subjects have been condemned to a lingering slavery? Are the owners of these vessels to be paid a compensation for the stripes and imprisonment of innocent men, who own allegiance to an *English* King? If this, however, is to be avowed, how shall the damage be appreciated? Let him retire to his calculations, and tell us at how much *per* hour he values an Englishman's liberty? The principle is in his own Excise laws; and he can resort to it without trouble and without regret. In the mean time I will tell him—(and unless I much mistake he will hear of this again)—that if at the time he accepted the Spanish Minister's Declaration, he was not in possession of full and sufficient evidence that every individual British subject captured at the Port of Nootka was released

leased from the Spanish dungeons, he is GUILTY OF AN IMPEACHABLE OFFENCE for having neglected to make their release the subject of an express stipulation.

Here I shall close my remarks upon the Spanish Declaration. An instrument which those who have attended to the preceding arguments will not wonder I should arraign as the most nugatory in its matter, the most insolent in its humility, that ever passed from one independent Monarch to another, purporting to be an atonement for an affront.

What remain for me to state, in further elucidation of the reasoning by which I support my charge against the Minister, are those clear, fixed, and immutable principles of public right, and the practice of nations, which in political disputes never are denied but by that Power notoriously in a condition to prescribe the law to its antagonist.

First, That in the case of an affront offered to the flag of an independent State, the act itself must be unconditionally disavowed;—a point sufficiently argued already.

Secondly, That where the affront is accompanied with acts of outrage to individuals, those acts shall be atoned for not only by the most ample indemnification in point of property, but by

the punishment of the officer who committed the outrage.

Thirdly, That if a denial, or improper delay of just satisfaction, compels a nation to arm with a view of vindicating its honour and asserting its undoubted rights, the nation, whose obstinacy and pertinacity alone is the cause of such armament, shall pay the expences of it.

No. XXIV.

October 22, 1790.

WITH regard to the first of these principles, it will not be sufficient that, after a long negotiation, the aggressor consent to disavow his act by a simple declaration. It must be done, not only effectively in itself, but with all the solemnity of apology. In these cases the process is simple, and the practice is established. The injured Sovereign exposes the nature of his complaint by his Ambassador, and should wait a reasonable time for an answer. If in that answer no satisfaction be offered, but expedients, delays, and sophistry be substituted in the room of it, his dignity forbids him to enter into the discussion of such matters; it becomes his duty to renew his
first

first demand, and in a peremptory tone to insist on compliance with it within a limited period. After this, he can go no further in negotiation: he must submit his cause to the law of arms. But if the offending party consent to make atonement, the laws of national honour require that every honourable formality be observed in the execution of this engagement; and that an Ambassador Extraordinary be sent for that purpose alone, to the Court of the offended Monarch, with a specific and direct apology to him for the insults of which he has complained.

The second principle is derived from the same source. Applied to this country, an exemplary punishment must be inflicted on the commander of any vessel, or expedition, or the perpetrator, whoever he may be, of any wanton barbarity upon the person of a British subject. The right of revenging such an act, which if his own arm contained sufficient strength, is in him by the law of nature, from his accidental incapacity to do so devolves immediately upon his country; and with his country, that right becomes a duty. Or what would be the use of apologies and disavowals? What effectual benefit would be derived to British commerce, what security would be gained for the persons of the merchants and seamen who carry it on, if those who pillage and torture

torture them are permitted to mock their sufferings, and repeat the same acts with impunity, while the two Courts are amusing each other with metaphysical disquisitions? Years, I may almost add, centuries of experience, must convince us of the necessity of insisting upon this principle in all our disputes with Spain. The law of retaliation alone, executed with promptness and severity, can ever operate as an effectual check to the barbarous treatment our seamen have ever suffered when captured in those latitudes in which Spain claims the privilege of exclusive navigation. Nor does the right of Great Britain to act thus depend merely on the general principles of justice; it is directly acknowledged by the 17th Article of the Treaty of Utrecht, which is as follows:—

Art. 17.—“ But if it happen through inadvertency, imprudence, *or any other cause*, that
 “ *any subject* of either of their aforesaid Royal
 “ Majesties do or commit any thing, by land,
 “ sea, or on fresh waters, *in any part of the*
 “ *world*, whereby this present treaty be not observed, or whereby any particular article of
 “ the same hath not its effect, this peace and
 “ good correspondence, between the King of
 “ Great Britain and the Catholic King, shall not
 “ therefore be interrupted or broken, but shall
 “ remain

“ remain in its former strength, force, and vigour; and that subject only *shall be answerable for his own act, and suffer such punishment as is inflicted by law, and according to the prescriptions of the law of nations.*”

An Englishman's ship is his castle. No power but the law can enter without his consent. Shall then a Spanish plunderer be suffered to invade it, and plead his master's will in justification? Whether *Don Martinez* is amenable to an English tribunal, to take his trial for an offence committed against British subjects on the high seas, is a question which I am not competent to decide. As a lawyer, Mr. Pitt ought to be better acquainted with this, and, if it be so, to have insisted that *Don Martinez* should be delivered up. In the other case, he should have stipulated for the infliction of a severe punishment on him for the acts of rapacity and cruelty of which he has been guilty.

Europe has long admired the efficacy of a justice that could reach the remotest shores, gladden the oppressed inhabitants of a desolated empire, and, “twice blessed” in itself, shed its benignant influence over cheerless and inhospitable regions. Let her now contemplate the sad reverse, when, stripped of its avenging sword, the justice

justice of Great Britain is too feeble to protect the suffering subjects of its own island !

As little can the third principle be denied. A security against pillage and inhuman treatment is to be required from the commanders of Spanish vessels, namely, responsibility for their conduct. A similar security is not less to be insisted upon from the Spanish nation, against the possible renewal of the same contumacy and insolence which have compelled us to incur a very heavy expence for preparations of defensive hostility. I confess, however, that this will not apply to the expences we have incurred since Mr. Pitt's acceptance of the Spanish Declaration.

No. XXV.

October 25, 1790.

THE positions I have here advanced are not only correct in themselves, but, if there must be a division between the question of honour and the question of right, the establishment of them belongs indisputably to the first, and ought to have been provided for under the head of satisfaction. That circumstances may exist, under which it would be the wiser measure to wave these

these points, I am not prepared to deny; but in that case it is a reason, and a conclusive one, for putting up with an affront, and not mooting them at all. For as (to apply the principle) a just cause of quarrel between this country and any other European power can scarcely be found, except in a violence done to its honour, so nothing can so much degrade us as to complain loudly of indignities offered to that honour, and afterwards to assert it by halves, and rest satisfied with a paltry, pecuniary satisfaction.—The honour of a country is the first and salient principle of its prosperity. A dignified assertion of it is always a just cause for war; commerce and territory, never.—

“ Rightly to be great,
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake.”

If we could not have proudly maintained this honour, we should have been cautious of committing ourselves to any humiliating national complaints that acknowledged an offence to it in the first instance. The assumption of a lofty tone of imperious haughtiness and anger could only serve to excite the contempt of our adversaries, and the pity of Europe.

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Whether

Whether the nation was in such unhappy circumstances as to make it inexpedient for her to insist on a proper satisfaction, is best known to the King's Ministers. From Mr. Fitzherbert's letter, I should be apt to conclude the affirmative, and to think that the high language ascribed to Mr. Pitt has, in point of fact, been confined to his own country, and to the description of his own achievements;—that the Count *de Florida Blanca* will vouch for his humility at Madrid.

But when I look to the state of Europe at that period, I must think otherwise. Great Britain seems then to have been in a condition, and to have remained so, until the signing of the Counter-declaration, to exact ample and complete satisfaction for the insult offered to her flag, and the injury done to her merchants. Founded on all these arguments, my charge against the British Minister is unanswerable. By neglecting to provide for the objects detailed under these three heads, he has proved himself incompetent to the duties of his office, and miserably ignorant of the principles of public law; and, by accepting the Declaration, he has lost the only moment at which he could have obtained the settlement of them, when by the seasonable interposition of a vigorous demand he might have prevented

prevented a war, or, if a war had been produced by it, have obliged Spain to stand alone against the British power.

It may be remembered, that in an early period of this discussion, I touched upon the two principal matters which render our situation at present so essentially different from that in which we stood at the beginning of the dispute. The first, relating to the object and character of the impending contest. This I stated to have become wholly changed from a necessary defensive war to a very questionable offensive one, from the moment Mr. Pitt committed the fatal mistake of acknowledging satisfaction; and, consequently, that having brought, as he imagined, his cause of complaint to an *issuable point* (I borrow one of his own phrases), and declared himself satisfied with the manner in which that point was settled, all his hostile preparations must necessarily have had an object connected, in no manner whatsoever, with the necessary vindication of the national honour.

I stated, in the second instance, that Spain had seized the lucky moment in which this change of the original ground was announced to Europe, to fill every Court with her intrigues, to detach our maritime alliances, to confirm her

own, and to revive the dormant confederacy of the neutral powers against Great Britain.

To a more ample consideration of this last I now proceed, sincerely regretting that the necessary detection of his errors as a negotiator has so long detained me from the review of that part of his conduct which is infinitely more censurable, and betrays still more his want of capacity, when looked upon as the leading Minister of an extensive empire.

No. XXVI.

October 22, 1790.

SINCE the exchange of the Declarations, Europe has witnessed a more sudden, a more extensive, and, in many instances, a more unexpected revolution in the aspect of politics, than ever has been experienced within the same given time; and in none will it be more felt than in its effect upon the naval superiority of this country, as well as upon the immediate success of our claims against Spain, unless the difference be terminated without having recourse to war,

I cannot,

I cannot, however, with any propriety, admit the degree of unlimited pre-eminence, which it has been so much the fashion of sanguine politicians to attribute to Great Britain and her allies. The system of continental alliances pursued by Mr. Pitt is, in my opinion—and I may venture to say, in the opinion of those whose names would give authority to doubts infinitely less warrantable—very ill calculated to give us that pre-eminence. It has the fundamental error of being grounded upon adventitious principles, and of depending for its stability upon the accidental weakness of those powers who must unite themselves of course in an opposite confederacy. But until a common cause, and a reasonable point of union should be given them, it is fair to say, that Great Britain, Prussia, and those of the Germanic body who could be depended upon, formed a connection of more efficient and active strength than belonged to any other European power whose offensive designs could be directed against the interests of this country. It were needless to say more. The test of Mr. Pitt's continental system will be the moment in which he draws the sword against a power whose aggrandisement in Europe never can be looked upon with any reasonable jealousy by Great Britain,

It is not, therefore, yet the moment to discuss this extensive question. We are now to consider in what manner he has preserved the actual existing force of this kingdom, a part of which its alliances are to be deemed. For although the badness of our alliances may be a strong reason against entering into a war, it must be allowed that the moment of impending hostility is not very favourable to a change in them. Bad alliances, if we must go to war, are preferable to none. It would have been enough, if Mr. Pitt, where he had a defensive alliance with a power not at war, had secured the performance of its stipulations. If, where he had allied himself to a power actually at war with another likely to become his enemy, he had prevented the sudden conclusion of peace between them and the subsequent conjunction of both in a confederacy against Great Britain; and, above all, if, where he had a security for the neutrality of our worst enemy, he had kept her in that humour by representations which his situation enabled him to make, and which, enforced with a due mixture of moderation and firmness, would apply with equal success to her interests and her fears.

Thus restrained from contending any preliminary objections, I am compelled to go further.

I must

I must admit, that his alliances had in view the old English defensive system of preventing the exorbitant aggrandisement of the House of Bourbon; that, as the means of so doing, he had good reason to prefer Prussia to Austria; that, of the two, he considered the kingdom of Prussia as possessed of more substantial strength, taking even into the scale the never-ending enmity of the Court of Petersburg to that of Berlin, which, in the event of a war with the Court of Vienna, would be sure to league with the latter. I must suppose this, and not that his choice of Prussia was dictated by a necessity imposed upon him by the strict connexion between the Courts of Vienna and Versailles, because, it is well known, that the formidable alliance of 1756, called the Treaty of Versailles, never was of any efficient *offensive* strength (and therefore useless to the Bourbon system); never was liked by the people of either countries, that the moment of its dissolution was eagerly looked for at Versailles, and its existence, even at Vienna, only prolonged from day to day, with the influence of Prince Kaunitz, by whom, in concert with the Cardinal de Bernis, it had been originally planned. As, during the life of Frederick the Second, this league had failed of its offensive purpose, I must conclude, from Mr.

Pitt's

Pitt's system, that he considers it equally liable to failure when its strength is exerted for an object purely defensive; and that when Prussia, in her turn, shall aim at dictating the law to Europe, the acquiescence of the allied Courts will be equally secure, as their confederated enmity was ineffectual, when they sought to deprive his uncle of his dominions.

No. XXVII.

November 1, 1790.

THE Prussian alliance, therefore, and the subsidiary treaties negotiated with other Princes of the German empire, must be considered, until some other object appears, as intended to balance the power of the House of Bourbon on the Continent. But now let us suppose the case of this country engaged in a war altogether naval, the object of which is not the establishment of any balance of power, but the extension of its commerce and navigation at the expense of others—How would a wise Minister act towards France?—Either he would oppose her possible interference with a formidable naval alliance, against which her exertions would be inefficient, or he would endeavour, by every means

means within his reach, to gain her neutrality. This were obviously the better method of the two, as the neutrality of France, secured at this moment of our dispute with Spain, must have inevitably dissolved that formidable union of the two kingdoms, which, while it exists, is an invincible impediment to the decided superiority of Great Britain.

In the front rank, therefore, of the British Minister's political faults, I place his conduct with regard to France. Considered in a general point of view, it has been uniformly mistaken and impolitic since his appointment to the head of affairs. In the year 1786, he negotiated a treaty of commerce with her, of which it was justly predicted, that in case the ambition of the House of Bourbon should be tempted to renew her old designs against the general tranquillity, Great Britain must cease to oppose her, lest she should lose the benefits of an advantageous commerce : that a war with France would not only be, like other wars, oppressive and ruinous in general, but that it would involve her in a calamity peculiar to itself, and be manifest in the bankruptcy of all those who had embarked their fortunes in the French trade. It was argued, therefore, that the profits of a trade with France would operate as a direct bribe upon the merchants and

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manufacturers

manufacturers of this country, to prevent, as far as in them lay, its interference in continental affairs, whenever France should renew her schemes of aggrandisement and despotism in Europe.

This reasoning was far from being opposed by the Minister. His friends went further; they denied the justice of those jealousies which our ancestors had ever nourished against the ambition of France: they denied the expediency of our opposing any of her continental plans. It was stated, by one of his most intimate associates, with much ability and eloquence, that the poor oppressed peasant, when he was called upon to pay the taxes for his day-light, his candles, and his fire, would think it an insult to his misery, to be told, that he had paid them for the balance of power in Europe. Now, mark the singular contradiction of the politics of this day! When the old system of the French monarchy was, to every rational appearance, in its vigour, Mr. Pitt was courting her alliance, and binding our merchants to her by the strictest obligations of a reciprocal and indissoluble interest. Now, that a comprehensive and complete revolution has totally stopped the source of her foreign intrigues, as well as of her domestic mischiefs—when she holds out the olive branch
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with a sincerity, arising not from the enthusiasm of the moment, not from a rash repentance and inconsiderate recognition of her errors, but from the universal prevalence of a disposition completely adverse from such pursuits, and of interests wholly incompatible with them, he rejects her friendship with a contempt equally unwise and unbecoming: he scatters between two countries, rivals no longer for dominion, the seeds of an inextinguishable discord; he renovates, and perpetuates to after ages, the spirit of hereditary hatred, and the principle of contest and desolation.

No. XXVIII.

November 2, 1790.

IT devolves not upon me to justify or condemn the French Revolution in either extreme. The fact, and the probability of its permanency, is all my argument requires; and even this in no greater degree than as conceding to me, that however matters may end with them, a return to the old system is impracticable. Declining, therefore, a minute enquiry into its merits, I must yet declare myself persuaded, that if the

contemplation of its progress must extort from us, on many accounts, sentiments of regret and abhorrence, it will justify not the less a due mixture of exultation, when we consider its probable effect upon the peace of mankind. At this point we may fairly pause. Humanity grants a tear to the melancholy scenes which it has witnessed; and while the heart of an Englishman readily expands itself to whatever is beautiful in the spontaneous efforts of infant liberty—to whatever is animating in the example of a generous people, whom the whips, the scorns, and tyranny of their fellow creatures have goaded into resistance, it were exerting a dominion over his reason scarcely less defensible to tell him, that, as a consequence of his sympathy, he must thence-forward approve all the disorders to which their resistance may lead, or all the hasty, intemperate decisions which may result from the establishment of a new order of things. But, on the other side, must he necessarily hope for a revival of the original mischief? Who is there that seriously wishes to France a return of the system from which she has delivered herself? To such a man, if such a man could be found, I would say, “the mildness of the laws under which you live has enervated your philosophy—Go to the house of mourning!

Descend

Descend with me into the dungeons of the Bastille: and while you tread over heaps of bones and carcases to read the tales of misery that wretches have inscribed upon its walls, remember these were the victims of a fierce and unhearing despotism, that nourished itself with the tears of its subjects; intercepted the beneficence of Heaven in its way to man; tore from the peasant's lip the scanty morsel of unprofitable labour, and held out to the world this impious principle—that the gratification of private revenge is the end of public punishment!”

An interest, however, much nearer than the settlement of any speculative doctrines on this event, demands the vigilance of an English Minister. Stained by the foulest murders, buried in the darkest ignorance, and governed by a rabble of tyrants; if such were a just representation of the state of France, her friendship must ever be useful, her enmity terrible: Grant me but the fair inference, that the revolution of her monarchy must operate a change in her foreign politics—I might indeed maintain, with little hazard, that the period was arrived, in which an alliance with Britain was practicable; but not wanting so much for my argument, I shall content myself with advancing this position—that her neutrality in the present contest, and all the
endless

endless advantages arising from her disunion with Spain, was within our reach, if the Minister's capacity had been on a level with his situation, and with the commanding ascendancy of the circumstances in which his country stood.

No. XXIX.

November 4, 1790.

THAT this vice in the French government, this insatiable ambition for conquest and aggrandisement, which has deluged so often the world with blood, is radically extirpated by the Revolution, depends not singly upon the testimony of general renunciations entered into by individuals, or by any bodies of men whatever. Reason and philosophy declare it. These invite to far different pursuits:—to the diffusion of industry, the encouragement of commerce and population, the improvement of science and the laws;—to the cultivation of those social and civil virtues, by which peace, prosperity and abundance are imparted to the human species. It is hence that I regard the resolutions of the National Assembly on this subject, not as leading the opinions of the people, but as themselves
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growing out of an establishment, whose object and end avows itself to be the securing these blessings to all. In this point of view, the evidence of the decrees themselves is not slight. The National Assembly have, in them, formally renounced all plans for the extension of their dominions at the expence of other nations. They have confirmed their countroul over the executive power, and deprived it of the means of infringing the spirit of this decree, by declaring the right of determining war and peace to reside in the nation. Mistrustful of themselves, and not of their monarch alone, in their review of the treaties existing between France and other powers, they have expressly excepted from confirmation, all decrees, the object of which are not merely defensive or commercial. Such is the magnanimous repentance! These are the peace-offerings of France to mankind!—The æra of their liberty they deemed auspicious to the sacrifice. Their prospects were as comprehensive as benevolence itself, and their arms were open to this country.

Peace, I take upon me to assert, was the general object, and friendship towards England, the universal feeling of the French nation, from Dunkirk to Marfeilles, when our fatal difference arose with Spain.

Prevalent

Prevalent, however, as these sentiments were at the time, they were far from meeting with the concurrence of all. Under the mask of an acquiescence which they are compelled to put on, there still rankles among many an incurable aversion to the new establishment. The sudden and afflicting vicissitudes of their fate, the remembrance of their darling honours, the ruin of their fortunes, the dismemberment of their illustrious families, added to what they suffer from the unrestrained licentiousness of bad men, to whose growth the convulsions of a State are but too propitious, contribute, one with another, to make them ardently wish for measures which may feed their hopes of change, as any change to them must be for the better.

This strong, and still powerful confederacy, to which the Monarch himself is supposed not to be adverse, look towards England with a less affectionate prejudice. They attribute, with what reason I know not, a considerable share of the popular discontents in France, and their consequent misfortunes, to the encouragement and secret machinations of their ancient rival.

Regarding the royal state as stripped of every valuable prerogative under its present restrictions, they unite in looking forward to a war as to the only possible chance of preventing the total annihilation

hilation of its remaining consequence ! By war they hope to sicken the spirit of daring innovation *, that invents new methods every day to confine and cripple the Sovereign. The decrees having yet left him at the head of the military and naval forces, a wise or a dazzling exertion of them might recover their affections : Where corruption can succeed, much good might arise from a judicious application of that enormous influence ever at the disposal of the executive power in time of war---much from a revival of the national ardour, which, becoming embodied for the public cause, submits to discipline, separates itself from the common mass, and learns at last to trust and to love the valour that leads it on to victory, or to glory. The nation itself would participate in the Monarch's triumph, and be ashamed to crush his laurels under a barren crown.

The views of the moderate ARISTOCRATES go not beyond this. Too wise ever to imagine a return to the old government practicable, their hopes go no further than to retrieve a portion of the regal power sufficient to give dignity to the Monarch and protection to themselves. Visionary theories of a counter-revolution are invent-

* Non meus hic sermo.

ed, it is true, every day, but belong to no national party in France. It will be evident that the hostile appearance of affairs between Great Britain and Spain, came admirably in aid of their wishes. Events confirm the speculation. They seized, with eagerness, the moment of an authenticated disclosure of the state of affairs, to press for a speedy armament, and as the negotiation developed itself, to enforce the claims of Spain for the succours stipulated by the Family Compact, on every principle of justice, of good faith, and of good policy.

No. XXX.

November 6, 1790.

THE situation of France, however, at the time to which I allude, took from the *Aristocrates* all hopes of succeeding in such views by their own influence. They rested upon their arms therefore, and waited in silence the gradual operation of events. These had hitherto been singularly favourable to Great Britain.

The whole efficient power lay with the National Assembly, supported by the people. With them

them the name of Englishman, in spite of certain rash declarations of Mr. Pitt, to which I shall again have occasion to advert, began to be dear, from its supposed relation to liberty and a free government. It was not a mere disinclination to war, resulting from the general principles I have stated before, that disposed them to favour the English cause:—it was a settled aversion to the particular species of war, in which they might be called upon to interfere, founded upon old habits of dislike to Spain, which already began to operate in their new system—upon serious doubts in regard to the justice of her cause—upon considerations of the absolute necessity of peace to the settlement of their constitution: and finally, upon the strongest suspicions of the motives of those who sought to involve them in the quarrel. Hence all the precautions I have had occasion to remark. Hence the suddenness of their resolutions, which, however agreed to in the abstract, visibly were intended to have their immediate and particular effect. Hence, when they voted the armament of fourteen sail of the line, in May, it was accompanied with such positive restrictions in point of orders, with the denunciation of such a terrible responsibility on those to whom the command of this force was entrusted, that, however at first the opinion may

seem a paradox, Spain, and not Great Britain, was, in effect, the country which had most reason to be dissatisfied at its equipment. It was hence that they deprived the Crown of the power of making war.—Suspecting too, that Mons. de Vauguyon had secretly stimulated the Court of Spain to this contest, they superseded that most able Minister in his embassy, and compelled him to give an account of the part he took in the negotiation. No war with England! our brothers in liberty! the friends of the rights of men!--was the general cry. Spain, instigated by French counsels, they deemed the aggressor, and in their debates, their decrees, their writings; in short, by every method by which the public opinion is capable of distinct expression, it was raised as with one voice, not only for peace generally, but for a total disruption from all political ties with Spain.

Such were the dispositions of the two parties, previous to the exchange of the Declarations between the Spanish Court and our's. Dispositions more hostile, more incongruous, or more highly charged with the spirit of a bitter, persevering, personal rancour, never, perhaps, were known to exist, since political animosities have divided mankind. It must have been a singularly happy talent in the British Minister, that could disco-

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ver the means of reconciling these two opposites against himself, and bringing them to a cordial coalescence on the very question, which had the most tendency of itself to drive them into every extremity of disunion.

In this posture of affairs, if ever a cause appeared desperate, it surely was that of Spain at Paris. Her situation, indeed, became every day more critical. Harassed by the demands of England, whose ability to enforce a compliance with them was now apparent—menaced with desertion by her ally, for whom she had twice sacrificed her navy—the rest of Europe occupied with their own quarrels, she found herself driven at last to the necessity of meeting the National Assembly with a bold face, and provoking a decision upon the question of the Family Compact. With this intention a Memorial was presented to the Ministers of the Court of France by the Spanish Ambassador, on the 16th of June.

Spain, however, had yet to learn what a powerful auxiliary she had in the British Minister. Some confidence, indeed, she might have reasonably placed in him when she understood his plan for the conduct of this negotiation—when she found he would be content with any thing he could get by way of apology, no matter how qualified, how explained, or how nugatory.

tory. But that he would suffer her to hesitate—that, twelve days after her principal Minister at Madrid had delivered, to the Ambassadors of all foreign Courts *, a circumstantial, digested, and detailed specification of those points to which she was determined to adhere, if any maritime power in Europe would espouse her quarrel, the British Minister would have suffered her with impunity to deliver a formal requisition to the Court of France, claiming an immediate compliance with the terms of the Family Compact—a claim of no less import than the junction of France with her whole force—that he would have suffered more than two months to elapse before any answer was given to this requisition, which time was employed under his very eyes, in disposing the minds of those who governed the country to favour the principles on which it was made—that he would have quietly witnessed her progress in other parts of Europe, and the success of her intrigues from Lisbon to the Baltick—were hopes certainly not in reason, and scarcely to be trusted even by the sanguine credulity of superstition itself.

* Memorial of the Catholic King, presented the 4th of June.

No. XXXI.

November 9, 1790.

WHAT method, therefore, did Spain pursue to avail herself of this disposition, at once haughty and accommodating, at once violent and irresolute, of the British Minister? Precisely the method he had chalked out for his own conduct: With this difference, that in regard to time and circumstances she suited her own convenience. A question had arisen of infinitely more consequence to her, that whether she should make a conditional concession to the British Court, or whether she should pay the value of the cargo of a British smuggler? Swayed by the wise counsels of the French Cabinet, who had previously founded the temper of that Assembly in whose breast the mutual hopes of the two Courts were deposited, aware of the necessity the British Minister had imposed upon himself of giving up all pretence to hostility before she should be necessitated to give up the smallest of her rights, Spain was soon convinced of the part it became her prudence to adopt. Not to be disturbed in the choice of her time was now the only point of importance. The great question which engrossed
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all her cares was not yet ripe for the decision she had been obliged to provoke. Precipitation in the least degree would have lost it irrecoverably; while, on the other hand, an absolute sense of safety compelled her, in urging her demands upon the French nation, to keep pace with the urgency of those advanced by the British Cabinet upon her. Peremptory language from hence must have forced her into peremptory language, and hazardous remonstrances, with her ally. The dilemma was distressing; but in the moment of decision the British Minister deliberated, and saved her.

When Spain was ready, and had disposed all matters for this experiment by a judicious management of the time of which she had been left the mistress, she came forward with her concessions, such as they were, and offered immediately to disarm. But here the British Minister could not follow her. He was in the embarrassing predicament of having obtained from his adversaries all that he had demanded; and yet on the main point, namely the preclusion of future disputes, of remaining exactly in the same spot from whence he had set out. He could not therefore disarm without acknowledging that he might as well not have armed at all; while he was compelled to continue armed upon an inverted principle,
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and for an object which, however necessary to his own personal vindication, ceased to be defensive the moment it was distinguished from the acts of outrage and hostility offered to his Sovereign's flag.

Mark, therefore, the natural and easy inversion of opinion and of action produced in the kingdom of France by this obvious change of principle!

That Mr. Pitt was an enemy to their Revolution had been long known to them. He had proclaimed it himself upon an occasion well remembered, and which reflects a new light upon the ingenuous simplicity of his moral character. The opportunity which, according to his way of judging of mankind, then presented itself of extending a division of sentiment (certainly a very material division of sentiment) between two leading members of Opposition into an open, eternal rupture, and of prolonging into anger, stubborn and implacable, the generous vehemence with which such men when they differ will always debate their differences, was not to be missed. A little dexterity on his part, he thought, would disunite them for ever upon all points. He grasped at the occasion with an eagerness little less than extravagant. Utterly forgetting his public station, utterly unmindful

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of

of the effect such declarations must have in other quarters, anxious alone to create disunion among friends, and to fix and confirm, if he could, what in their dissensions might be momentary or doubtful, he came forward as the Minister of the Crown of Great Britain, with his sentiments on the internal proceedings of a State, with which he had himself connected his country by solemn treaties; of a State, whose nearer friendship it had become his interest to cultivate for that very cause, and on those very grounds which he had selected for breaking all measures with her, and originating an entirely new spirit of national inveteracy and discord.

At this time, however, there existed no probability of a rupture with England; and the effect of his precipitate and unbidden declaration on the minds of men in France was limited to opinions merely personal to himself. They saw nothing in his principles either to awaken their fears, or impede their progress. They waited until he should be disposed to give them effect and prevalence. Even the dispute with Spain occasioned at first but a partial alarm. Whatever measures of precaution they found it necessary to pursue, it was precaution without hostility. Too much enthusiasts for suspicion, too speculative

speculative to comprehend that a nation which glories in its freedom can wish to preclude others from the enjoyment of its blessings, they scorned to implicate the country which had taught them its first lessons, in the guilt of its Minister. They clung to the last hope that held out to them a possibility of friendship and union with England.

But not long were they suffered to remain in a sentiment which a salutary policy might have improved to such infinite advantage! The British Minister was committed on the issue of his negotiation with Spain: he was to recover, at any risque, the pernicious error with which he had originally commenced it. He looked no longer to foreign affairs. The precipitating his country into a general war with the maritime powers shrunk in his mind into nothing when staked against the popularity he had risked. That very war, the prospect of which but a few days before had scared and terrified him—that very war, to avoid which he had receded from his two original propositions, permitting, in the first place, a discussion of five months on the question of satisfaction, although he had begun with declaring that he would have satisfaction previous to any discussion—and assenting in the next to the adequacy of that satisfaction, although it

precluded no future disputes—that very war, I repeat, he now found himself obliged, not for his country but himself, to provoke and accelerate under every additional circumstance of disadvantage. His armaments accordingly were redoubled after the exchange of the Declarations. It was then that he began to press his other points with a degree of pertinacity perfectly inconsistent with his former forbearance. In this extremity France could no longer remain neuter. The eyes of the National Assembly, as well as of the country at large, began to open upon this conduct. They saw, or imagined they saw,—and never surely did the behaviour of an English Minister so much warrant the conclusion,—purposes very different, and infinitely more extensive, gradually develope themselves in his proceedings. They remembered, but gloried in remembering, their own conduct in regard to America, and fancied the moment of their distractions presented an opportunity to retaliate, which those who guided the British counsels would scarcely miss: that the attack meditated against Spain, was but the commencement of a plan, the object of which was the commerce, the colonies, and the maritime power of their own country: that when Spain had fallen, as fall she must, if single and unsupported in such a contest,

test, their turn would come next. The encrease of his armament, after he had declared that, in the way of redress for injuries, he had nothing further to expect from Spain, confirmed their reasoning; and as far as passions and resentments could operate, these were sufficiently roused by the ungenerous attempt, as they deemed it, to plunder them of their possessions in such a moment, and to thwart the settlement of their constitution.

No. XXXII.

November 11, 1790.

WHEN once the tone was given—when suspicion and mistrust had once begun to work upon the vivacity of the French character, it is not to be told how rapidly these impressions were received in every circle. The prospect of peace, which had been raised by the exchange of the Declarations, soon vanished. In the interval of its continuance, however, the National Assembly had pledged themselves to maintain the Family Compact under certain limitations. A sense of common danger taught them its value

value more and more. What one day was a principle of good faith, became the next a principle of self-preservation. By degrees, the most opposite and jarring factions began to co-operate. Even the people, for this once were satisfied with their Ministers; and the man, who but a few weeks before would have been exhibited upon a lamp-post for hazarding a proposition the most remotely favourable to Spain, was now extolled to the skies, as possessing every quality that can distinguish the Patriot and the Statesman, for his share in the renovation of the Treaty.

Thus, at the moment in which this formidable confederacy was at the point of dissolution from causes peculiar to itself, when the whole circle of political events could offer but one to save it, Mr. Pitt condescendingly brought that event to the door of his adversaries; namely, the necessity of a mutual union to the individual safety of each country. Actuated by a wise and comprehensive foresight, and not by a spirit of disputatious and wrangling sophistry, had he preserved, and kept together, all the points for which he was contending, so as to drive Spain at once into an explicit avowal of those to which she meant to adhere—Had Mr. Fitzherbert been instructed to menace her with his return to England

England on the rejection of his proposals, during the time that she was remonstrating and memorialising the French Ministers, one of these two things must have followed :—Either he would have obtained his convention at a much less expence to the country, and a much less detriment to its commerce, and the Family Compact would have been still left open to subsequent views ; or if Spain had determined upon war, that question must have been pressed on to its decision at a time when the National Assembly would have infallibly rejected it *in toto*. A wise Minister for England would have given no room for the management by which it was secured. The requisitions of Spain for assistance, and more particularly the last, presented on the 16th of June, was tantamount to a declaration of war ; and as such, would have been considered, under all the advantages Great Britain then possessed, by a Minister justly resolute, and whose spirit and decision had some better foundation than the heavy panegyric of a newspaper. When a nation demands succours from her allies, and upon hesitation renews the demand with a menace that, unless it be immediately complied with, she will renounce her alliance and seek others, is it a time for discussion, distinctions, and a timid, temporising negotiation ?

tiation? It was, indeed, if ever, the moment for vigour, and a rapid decision; and for founding upon the disunion of our enemies, instead of expecting from their fears, a new æra of prosperity and splendour for this country. For France, as we have seen, disliking any sort of war, and protesting against an offensive one, was ready to renounce a treaty of which she then considered nothing but the obligation that would have involved her in it; and Spain, disgusted, as she would have had reason to be, with the want of faith in her ally, must have conceded every thing we could ask in any way. The circumstances of Europe were little favourable to her *search of other allies* (with which she had menaced the Court of France), if her object had been resistance to our demands. What must have followed? By temperate and healing counsels, the necessity which had driven Spain to submission, might have soon been softened into preference, and a friendship, infinitely beneficial to both countries, have arisen from it. The object was feasible: it was nothing new. Political and commercial ties with Spain would have had but to seek their old channel, whence the successful arms of France, when France possessed all her energies, and her still more successful negotiations, from the treaty of

of the Pyrennees to the Family Compact, had diverted them. That compact at an end, one branch of which we know is commercial, and the balance of its advantages wholly against Spain, and ended, as it would have been, under circumstances at once galling to the pride, and offensive to the honourable gallantry of the Spanish nation, it was not Russia, it was not Sweden, or any other of the neutral Powers that she was to seek; it was Great Britain that stood next in her view, as the country to which it would be most her interest to attach herself. Nearly to this length she went in her declaration to Monsieur de Montmorin. Great Britain is not to be excepted from the fair meaning of the following words, when Spain threatened France with other treaties and “*different*” alliances—“The ties of blood and personal friendship which unite our two Sovereigns, and the reciprocal interest of two nations, united by nature, shall be *respected* in all *new arrangements*, as far as *circumstances will permit*.”—Let this be coupled with what we know relative to the Commercial Treaty, which Mr. Eden was to have negotiated with Spain in the year 1787, and which failed, as it is generally admitted, only from its injurious tendency to the interests of France; it is obvious, that when France had set her at liberty

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from those engagements, every impediment to a connection at once the most profitable, the most honourable, and the most rational, of any that Europe could offer to us, was wholly done away ; and a new world thrown open to British enterprize, not upon the precarious security of extorted and unintelligible conventions ; but upon the sanction of reciprocal interests, of a policy well understood, and of a national fidelity grounded upon mutual confidence and esteem.

Such had been the benefits of a dissolution of the Family Compact : benefits attainable, as all circumstances convince me, without having recourse to war ; and evidently more worth the risque of it than all the concessions of this strange Convention, enumerated an hundred fold. I have heard of Mr. Pitt's *fortune*—Certainly if he were endowed with a capacity to draw the fair profit from opportunities which Fortune has lavished before him with open hands, the period of his administration would be evidently conspicuous in the page of history. But never, surely, did a Minister so abuse her indulgence as he has done, in his late proceedings with the Court of Spain ! The mischief of the Family Compact, in its full malignity, has not yet been felt by this country. Perhaps the day of experiment

ment is not very distant. Until then (and long may be the interval!) we can but speculate upon the extent and consequences of a fault, than which, in the eye of a Statesman, one more censurable never was committed in politics.

No. XXXIII.

November 16, 1790.

HAVING thus restored to Spain her principal ally, just as he was going to war with her, it were next to be considered, whether he had been equally provident for his country in securing the co-operation of her own. I am aware, however, that independent of the many difficulties of this subject, the temporary suspension of our differences (for that this Convention is a final settlement of them, no man in his senses believes), will considerably diminish its immediate interest. When peace appears established, few men will be disposed to speculate upon the doubt whether, in the event of war, we were likely to have derived much effectual assistance from Holland? There are, however, some general considerations which may not be wholly undeserving our attention. I am one of those, whose expectations from

a Dutch alliance have ever been of the most sanguine; but, I am confident that, to give us its due benefits, a judicious management of the habits and dispositions of men, the appearance of moderation in our views, and the prospect of some ultimate advantage to the Republic, are highly essential. It is a nation that will not be inconsiderately driven into the measures of any foreign power whatever. It is true, that the sudden exercise of a mighty force delivered Holland from the influence of France; but I much doubt whether, under the circumstances of either country, the continuance, or the appearance of coercive measures, is the right method of keeping her steady in the opposite scale. Fear is, at all times, but a bad incitement to active friendship. In our connections with Holland, I am sure it is wholly a new ingredient. The use of terror, as an instrument of political views, is simply that of prevention. In the case of Holland, it has nothing to act upon: the French faction is no more; there is no trace of it; but certainly there are very serious discontents. Its effects, therefore, must be doubly prejudicial. Men must have some principle to unite upon. If any thing could re-assemble the dispersed members of that faction, and give them a common cause, it certainly would be the betray-
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ing a scheme of governing Holland by a Prussian army.

This principle will be found to apply very strongly to Mr. Pitt's system in regard to that country. With Prussia at his back, he counted upon her *not daring to refuse* fulfilling the stipulations of the treaty of 1787. But it may be worth considering, whether if Holland had joined him with her ships under these impressions, she would have joined him with that without which her ships are useless hulks upon the ocean; I mean the spirit of her men, and the zealous indefatigable perseverance of her national character.

This, however, is by no means the only defect of such a system. To govern Holland through Prussia, an English Minister must necessarily subject himself to two evils. The operative influence of a land army being more direct and less doubtful than that of a naval force, he must, in the first place, submit to appear in a subordinate character at the Hague. He must quietly suffer his land ally to pursue every means of increasing his authority over their counsels. In the next, he must connect himself with the Court of Berlin on principles which the natural interests of his country will scarcely warrant. I profess myself a friend to that ancient system of continental connections which had for its object re-

sistance

sistance to the inordinate aggrandisement of the House of Bourbon. But when the head of that House presents to mankind the spectacle of awful humiliation which it does at present, I must own that I see nothing but madness in the counsels which condemn this impoverished country to follow the King of Prussia to Reichenbach and Breslau, and to support his idle menaces at the Court of Petersburg. Involving, in this manner, our interests with his, although indeed it were far from an easy task to shew in what one advantage of his success we should participate, we involve our honour too. We are pledged to share his fortune; and, such is the fatality!—have in one instance borne more than our share of his disgraces. This Monarch did once fancy himself at the head of Europe, and appeared indeed to act as if he was. He has ended, however, in much charity with some of his enemies. To the Emperor he has made a present of his revolted provinces in Brabant; he has enabled him to suppress a spirit of dangerous insurrection in others. To put his injuries on a footing with his benefits, he has done this, and given him his vote in the Electoral College besides, as the reward for his neutrality (most salutary neutrality to that Monarch) in the Turkish war. With regard to Poland, he has nearly

ruined

ruined his influence in that quarter, by acting upon a mistaken view of the politics of Europe, which had persuaded him that he had then an opportunity of succeeding in his designs upon some of the remaining dominions of that Republic. On the side of Russia, both he and his ally of Great Britain have met with the most mortifying contempt. To this point, therefore, my observation fairly applies. It is a fact which I call upon the Minister's friends to deny, that the King of Prussia, upon receiving the dignified answer of Catherine to his haughty proposals, namely, *that she would decide upon peace or war, under the circumstances which should make either appear adviseable to herself, without asking the permission of any foreign power*, did actually, in vehement indignation, apply to the British Court for a fleet of men of war to be sent, forthwith, to the Baltick ; and that, to obviate the objection with regard to the lateness of the season (of his right to demand the ships he had no doubt), he proposed the singular expedient of wintering them at Dantzick, in order that they should be ready for early operations in the ensuing season. The British Minister has not been quite ill-judging enough to comply with this wild demand ; and, if report speaks true, has dissatisfied his ally not a little by demurring to it. The suspension of
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his dispute with Spain happens fortunately enough for him in this respect, as it is but fair to infer that his refusal to comply with the requisition of the King of Prussia would have prevented that Monarch from co-operating very cordially with him at the Hague, in forwarding the equipment of any armament he might demand under the stipulations of the defensive Treaty.

No. XXXIV.

November 20, 1790.

IF the policy of the British Minister, however, towards Holland is extremely questionable, that with respect to Sweden is most mischievous, weak, and disreputable, whether considered with a view to the principle of his engagements with her, the circumstances under which he broke them, or the manner in which his adversary has profited from his faults.

Had he been called upon, either by some pressing national necessity, or tempted by any plausible prospect of national interest, Mr. Pitt would scarcely have scrupled to proceed in the regular way, by negotiating a treaty with the
King

King of Sweden to secure his object upon some permanent principle of reciprocity : he would afterwards either have laid that treaty before Parliament, or have informed Parliament simply of the fact, and stated reasons of State for withholding the production of its articles. With a different purpose to answer, he has followed a very different course. Not content with involving himself deeply in the continental schemes of the King of Prussia by a treaty which is to furnish that monarch with English money, or English soldiers, at his option, Mr. Pitt contrives an ingenious method of granting him, circuitously (wonderfully fond is this Minister of coming at his point by these means), the disposal of a very considerable part of the English naval forces. Directly to promise him that when he should attack the Empress of Russia by land, Great Britain would send a fleet to the Baltick to assist his operations, would have been too much. The country would not have borne such a profligate engagement, by which her blood and her treasures would be lavished, to gratify the little passions of a foreign despot. They concert a better plan. The King of Prussia, with the assistance of subsidies, first establishes a close connection with Sweden. Great Britain keeps in the back ground ; does not accede to this treaty, or

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admit the accession of Sweden to her own treaties with Holland, or with Prussia, but stipulates secretly with the latter, that under certain circumstances she will assist his confederate, the King of Sweden, with a powerful fleet. The effect of this curious scheme will soon appear. Its end is obvious; its principle cannot be sufficiently reprobated. Whether, under any circumstances, it were expedient to enter into defensive engagements with Sweden, is surely a very serious question of general politics; but when a Minister takes upon himself to decide that question in the affirmative, the extent and purpose of such engagements surely becomes a consideration of sufficient magnitude to form a solemn national compact by itself, instead of being smuggled under a secret article in another treaty, the avowed object of which is wholly different. Such a proceeding deserves no better character than that of a direct, palpable, unqualified fraud upon Parliament and the country.

Next, as to the breach of them. Still avoiding to come forward in person, during the life of Joseph II. the King of Prussia, acting by his subsidies to Sweden, excites that monarch to break the peace with the Empress, and to attack her with a considerable land army, and the whole of his maritime force. The corresponding part
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of this manœuvre is played off by the British Minister at Copenhagen, who menaces the Court of Denmark with hostilities if she assists Russia, as she is bound to do by treaties.—The war begins : it were needless to go into the detail of it. The commonest observer is in possession of the principal events in the naval campaigns of the King of Sweden ; of the various proofs of his undaunted resolution ; of his alternate misfortunes and success ; until a courage, rash and desperate, as it has been deemed, but rash and desperate alone in trusting to the promises of the British Minister, involved him in a situation of extreme personal peril, from which nothing but a Providence, as wonderful as his genius, could have saved him. In that fearful moment, he cast a long look for the succours which had been promised him, to whet the ardour of his enterprise, and to tempt his hopes of revenge as well as glory. Not a frigate did we arm in his cause ! Thus deserted on all sides, and left to the resources of his own mind alone, he put his fate to the hazard of one bold exertion, and opened a way through his enemies to his capital, where he arrived with scarcely any thing left him but his sword.

That great monarch is not silent as to the cause of his misfortunes. He makes no scruple to

declare, that Great Britain had promised to join him early in the season, with a force that would have given him the decided superiority in the Baltick ; that otherwise he never would have entered the Gulf of Wybourg.

Having presumed for so long on the public attention, I am now anxious to compress the remainder of what I have to offer within limits that may justify its indulgence. Much important matter, therefore, must necessarily escape me ; among others, the enquiry, generally, into the policy of defensive engagements with the Court of Stockholm. But, to state shortly the result of what I have been able to observe on that subject, I am clear, that in one point of view, and only one, is there common sense in forming such a connection ; also that the mode of it should have been by a treaty with mutual stipulations, under which we might have availed ourselves of the principle of reciprocity. We had an object of much importance to gain, and much to offer for that object. A wise Minister would have made our alliance the price of a renunciation, on the part of Sweden, of the celebrated northern confederacy, under the effects of which we smarted severely during the last, and shall smart still more severely, perhaps, in any future war. Independent of the weight of his own friendship,

ship, the British Minister did not come empty handed to Sweden. Whatever disgust may have subsisted between the Courts of Petersburg and London, the connection had never been wholly broken off.—While we had entered into no engagements positively hostile to her, the wise and politic Princess who governs, and will continue to govern the North, saw, through the perplexities of our foreign system, some glimmering rays of light by which Great Britain, in better times, might find her way to those old habits and old friends, under the auspices of which her prosperity and pre-eminence in Europe had been first obtained. For those times she had reserved herself. Deciding, therefore, upon a sacrifice of so much importance to Sweden, the British Minister might have demanded with reason a similar pledge of her fidelity. But it is easy to perceive that such an engagement would have favoured the views of Prussia but in a collateral degree; and Prussia was to be first consulted. Bound hand and foot, and delivered over to Frederick William, the English nation was compelled to follow his standard unconditionally, without the prospect of any one solitary benefit to herself, whether of power, of commerce, or of navigation.

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But whatever doubts, to say no more, we may entertain of those engagements with Sweden in point of policy, there can be none on the conduct it behoved us to follow, when once the public faith was pledged for their performance. They who seek to distinguish between the honour and the interests of a nation, and who would oppose the captious interpretations of political expediency to the simplicity of good faith, treat of a subject they are incapable of comprehending. They know neither the value of the honour they are so ready to forfeit, nor, of the benefits they propose to themselves by its surrender. Still worse is that Minister who provokes the alternative, and imposes upon his country the hard necessity of a choice in which she can neither adopt the one without loss, nor the other without disgrace.

One point alone was wanting to complete that disgrace! Abandoned by the British Minister in the moment of his distress, it remained with the King of Sweden to shew his sense of this conduct by some mark of contempt, which should embrace the opinions of Europe, and conciliate the suffrages of posterity. He did so. He made his peace without imparting one syllable of his intentions to Prussia who subsidized him, or to the British Cabinet who had sacrificed

sacrificed Russia to him. But, to point the indignity more directly to Great Britain, of all the powers in Europe, which did he choose for his mediator? Spain. Do we ask of what description were the belligerent powers, that Spain should manifest such an interest in their reconciliation? One we shall find to be, in effect, the ally of Great Britain, and the other likely to become its enemy in the event of hostilities with Spain. Thus, whether we follow him to Madrid, or to Paris, or to Stockholm, we shall find the British Minister baffled or insulted in every quarter. Flattery finds out a soothing balm for every mind. But a Minister's character in foreign Courts, where men have nothing either to gain or to lose by their opinions, is known by his effect with them. I try him at Madrid, by his Counter-Declaration; at Paris, by the Family Compact; in the North, by the peace between Sweden and Russia, made without his consent or his knowledge, directly against his interests, and negotiated under the sanction of his avowed adversary, who had given him notice that she meant to search Europe for alliances to oppose him. It is there that I read with shame the degree to which my country is degraded, when she suffered an ally to be literally forced out of her hands at the only moment in which he began to be serviceable,

serviceable, by that very power against whose intrigues and machinations his assistance would have been chiefly required.

To sum up, therefore, in one short point of view, the situation in which we stand in Europe, as resulting from our recent differences with the Court of Spain.—The great branches of the House of Bourbon are united. Russia is decidedly our enemy ; and is secure at all times of Sweden and Denmark, if not for an immediate alliance with the House of Bourbon, certainly for the re-union of the neutral confederacy, the effects of which we must feel infinitely more when the head of that confederacy connects itself directly with an adverse power. With a force thus consolidated against us, we want but a **STANDING CAUSE OF QUARREL**, of which our enemies may avail themselves when it suits their convenience. This the glorious Minister presents to his country under the name of “**A CONVENTION** for terminating all past differences, and for stopping up the source of all disputes in future :” I suppose on the same principle that certain atrocious acts of Parliament, passed at a period when Kings were more profligate than their Ministers, were usually named in their several preambles—“*Acts for quieting the consciences and securing the liberties of the subject.*”

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But here I resign him to other hands. My plan for these discussions extends no further than his negotiations; in them I have unanswerably proved, that the British Minister, presuming upon abilities which belong not to his measure of mind, and entangling himself with an experienced Statesman, who managed him as he pleased from February to July, failed most lamentably in the first great object of his armament, namely, the obtaining an adequate satisfaction for the insult offered to the British flag. How he has succeeded in his second, in the definitive arrangement by which all disputes with Spain are to be for ever precluded, may possibly be the subject of a future speculation. For the present, I deliver him up to the severer scrutiny of Parliament, where he must produce his negotiations, his offensive and defensive treaties, and all those documents of state which serve to ascertain what it is more than ever necessary for us to know, the relative situation of Great Britain with regard to foreign powers. I leave him, with this general opinion of his Convention, which I would pledge myself, if the pledge were of any weight, to make appear;—that, never since Conventions were in use, WAS THERE ONE FRAMED SO POSITIVE IN ITS DEFINITION OF WHAT WE SURRENDER, SO LOOSE IN ITS DESCRIPTION

OF WHAT WE ACQUIRE, SO INGENUOUSLY CONTRIVED TO PREVENT TWO NATIONS, WELL-DISPOSED TOWARDS EACH OTHER, FROM CONTINUING LONG AT PEACE, AND THE PEACE ONCE BROKEN TO PRECLUDE EVERY POSSIBILITY OF OUR BEING IN THE RIGHT.

F I N I S.